# THE TRAGEDIES OF ÆSCHYLUS.

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# THE TRAGEDIES OF ÆSCHYLUS TRANSLATED.

By R. POTTER.

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# PREFACE.

THE noble author, with whoſe remaining tragedies the public is here preſented, was an Athenian of an honourable family, diſtinguiſhed for the ſublimity of his genius and the ardor of his martial ſpirit. In his youth he had read Homer with the warmeſt enthuſiaſm; and finding his great maſter unrivalled in the poſſeſſion of the Epic, he early conceived the deſign of creating a new province for himſelf, and forming the Drama; ſo much we may be allowed to infer from the fable, that whilſt he was yet a boy Bacchus appeared to him as he lay aſleep in a vineyard, and commanded him to write tragedies. This noble deſign he ſoon executed, and before the twenty-fifth

year of his age began to entertain his countrymen with repreſentations worthy of an Athenian audience. He had purſued theſe ſtudies about ten years, when Darius invaded Greece. His generals, Datis and Artaphernes, with an army of two hundred thouſand foot and ten thouſand horſe were now advanced to the plains of Marathon, diſtant only ten miles from Athens. The danger, that threatened his country, called forth the martial ſpirit of our poet, and very honorable mention is made of him, and his two brothers, Cynægirus and Amynias, for their eminent valour in that battle: to have wanted courage on ſuch an occaſion would have been a mark of the moſt abject baſeneſs; but to be diſtinguiſhed in an action, where every ſoldier was an hero, is a proof of ſuperior merit: in a picture repreſenting the battle of Marathon the pourtrait of Æſchylus was drawn: this was all the honour that Miltiades himſelf received from the ſtate for his glorious conduct on that day; he was placed at the head of the ten commanders, and drawn in the act of encouraging the ſoldiers and beginning the battle.

Some time after, Cynægirus was one of the four naval commanders who, with an armament of one thouſand Grecians,

Grecians, defeated thirty thouſand Perſians; but he loſt his life in the action.

Ten years after the battle of Marathon, when Xerxes made that immenſe preparation to revenge the defeat of his father, we find the two ſurviving brothers exerting their courage in the ſea-fight off Salamis: here Amynias, too boldly laying hold of a Perſian ſhip, had his hand lopped off with a ſabre; but Æſchylus defended him, and ſaved his life; and the Athenians decreed him the firſt honours, becauſe he was the firſt to attack the commander of the Perſian fleet, ſhattered the ſhip to pieces, and killed the Satrap. It is obſerved that the two brothers were ever after inſeparable. The following year Æſchylus acquired freſh glory in the battle of Platæa, where the brave Perſian Mardonius was defeated and ſlain.

Having taken this active part in three the moſt memorable battles that grace the annals of Greece, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf as a good citizen and a brave man, he returned with ardor to his former ſtudies, and completed his deſign of making the Drama a regular, noble, and rational entertainment. He wrote about ſeventy tragedies, and was in great eſteem with his countrymen: but upon ſome diſ-

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guſt in the latter part of his life he retired from Athens to the court of Hiero king of Sicily, where about three years after he died in the ſixty-ninth year of his age. The cauſe of this diſguſt is variouſly related: ſome impute it to his impatience of the riſing fame of Sophocles, yet a young man, to whom the prize was adjudged againſt him; others to the preference given to the Elegies of Simonides written in honour of thoſe, who fell in the field of Marathon.

But to have excelled in Elegy could have added no glory to the ſuperior genius of Æſchylus: neither does it appear probable that ſuch a conteſt ſhould have happened thirty years after the battle was fought. From the other charge one would wiſh to vindicate ſo great a name; and happily it carries its own confutation with it; for whether Sophocles was only ſeven or ſeventeen years younger than Æſchylus, which is not preciſely determined, he could not be a young man when the other was ſixty-four; and we know that the prize was adjudg'd to the laſt exhibition of Æſchylus, which conſiſted of his Agamemnon, the Choephoræ, the Furies, and a ſatyric piece. But the tragedy of the Furies gave great offence to the city; and the poet, whether for that or on ſome other pretence, was

accuſed

accuſed of impiety. His brother Amynias pleaded his cauſe: the Athenians were ſtruck with this inſtance of fraternal affection, they reverenced their maimed veteran, and Æſchylus was acquitted. But ſuch a ſpirit was not formed to ſubmit to the affront; it made too deep an impreſſion to be effaced; and the poet quitted the city with great indignation, declaring with a noble pride that he would entruſt his tragedies to poſterity, certain that he ſhould receive from thence the honour he deſerved. This honour the Athenians ſoon paid to his noble works: by a decree of the ſenate, never granted to any other, they offered rewards to any man that ſhould again exhibit his plays; they frequently adjudged the prize to him after his deceaſe, and acknowledged him *the Father of Tragedy.*

To comprehend the juſtneſs of this honorable appellation, and to form a preciſe idea of the originality of Æſchylus, it will be neceſſary to trace the Tragic Muſe from her birth to her yet infirm ſtate when this poet gave her ſtrength, ſpirit, and dignity. The ſtory has been told, it ſeems, twenty times already; let it not give offence if it be told once more: it ſhall be a ſhort tale. Tragedy then was at firſt no more than a ruſtic ſong in honour of

Bacchus, attending the ſacrifice of a goat, an animal hated by the God becauſe its bite is particularly hurtfull to the vine. What was originally no more than an accidental frolic became an annual cuſtom, next a public ſacrifice, and thence an eſtabliſhed rite; for as every thing in Pagan antiquity was ſacred, ſports and amuſements were changed into feaſts, and the temples were converted into theatres: but this by due degrees. The Grecians, advancing in poliſhed manners, carried into their towns a feaſt that ſprung from the leiſure of the country: their beſt poets took a pride in compoſing theſe religious hymns to the honour of Bacchus, and embelliſhed them with the agreeable entertainments of muſic and dancing. After a length of time, the ſongs advancing in perfection, it was found neceſſary to give the ſinger ſome relief; and that the company might be amuſed during the pauſes of the muſic, an actor was introduced: his part could be no other than a ſingle ſpeech, ſetting forth that he repreſented Hercules, or Theſeus, or ſome other hero of antiquity, and had performed ſuch or ſuch an illuſtrious achievement: at the next pauſe another perſonated character advanced; at the next, another; but each unrelated and unconnected with the other.

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This we imagine to be the ſtate of things, till Theſpis and Phrynicus had the addreſs to continue the ſame interlocutor thro' every pauſe of the muſic, and to make him the narrator of one uniform and continued ſtory. The novelty had the good fortune to pleaſe; and as the ſtories were intereſting, the ſongs in honour of Bacchus ceaſed to amuſe, till by degrees they loſt their original deſign, and took their colouring from the intermediate repreſentation. Such was the rude ſtate of Tragedy, when Æſchylus conceived the great deſign of forming it into a new ſpecies of poetry that ſhould rival even the Epic in dignity. The humble arbor interwove with vine branches gave place to ſcenes of aſtoniſhing grandeur; the actor, no longer mounted on the cart of Theſpis with his face ſmeared over with lees of wine, or covered with a maſk formed from the bark of a tree, now trod a ſpacious ſtage, magnificently habited in a robe of honour and the ſtately buſkin; even the maſk, that eternal diſgrace of the Athenian theatre, wore a new and elegant form expreſſive of the character repreſented. But theſe exterior decorations were proofs only of the taſte of Æſchylus: his ſuperior genius appeared in giving life to the piece, by introducing the dialogue,

dialogue, without which there could be no action; and from this circumſtance it is that he is with the higheſt propriety called the Father of the Drama. It is commonly ſaid that Æſchylus never produced more than two ſpeakers upon the ſtage at the ſame time; there are proofs to the contrary, tho' he generally adhered to that ſimple plan: but the new part, which the Chorus now took, amply ſupplied what we ſhould call that poverty of the ſtage.

The Muſic and the Dance could not, without infinite offence, be withdrawn from the gay and lively Athenians: Æſchylus therefore retained the Ode and Muſic, which properly ſpeaking conſtituted the original Tragedy; but he adapted it to his plan, and intereſted it in the action; thereby giving an unity of deſign to the whole, an agreeableneſs and ſplendor to the ſpectacle, and adding the force and ſpirit of Lyric Poetry to the gravity and magnificence of the Tragic ſtile: but ſuch was the ſimplicity of antient manners, ſupported by truth and decency, that the Chorus yet retained the moral and ſacred air of the firſt inſtitution; hence we find it always grave, ſententious, ſublime, and ardent in the cauſe of liberty, virtue, and religion.

Æſchylus

Æſchylus had ſtudied Homer with attention and judgement; from him he might learn propriety and dignity of character, ſublimity of conception, and magnificence of expreſſion: and it was impoſſible for him not to obſerve the neceſſity of building his plan upon one great and intereſting action: but in this nature and good ſenſe preſcribed a different conduct to the Tragic and the Epic poet. In the cloſet the mind may be agreeably entertained by the Epic muſe, whilſt ſhe leads us backwards and forwards thro' the various fortunes of her hero, and ſometimes makes excurſions in purſuit of incidental adventures; whilſt the imagination loves to attend her in her flights, and diſdains to be confined by the narrow limits of time and place. But where the poetic imitation is made by action, and repreſented at once to the eye, a ſeverer diſcipline becomes neceſſary; that faithfull monitor checks the rovings of fancy, exacts a ſober regard to unity of time and place, and demands a ſimpler plan: the good ſenſe of Æſchylus led him to obſerve this; and in alluſion to it he often uſed to ſay, with much modeſty, that his tragedies were only ſingle diſhes taken from the great feaſt of Homer.

But if the Tragic Muſe loſt any thing in the regions of imagination, ſhe found herſelf amply recompenſed by the empire ſhe acquired over the paſſions; the imitation of nature is her province, as well as the Epic Muſe's; and this imitation is ſtronger and more perfect in action than in narration. Æſchylus, by introducing the Dialogue and engaging the Chorus in the intereſt of the Drama, gave birth to Action properly ſo called, and placed the Actors in ſuch a lively manner before the eyes of the ſpectators, that they ſuffered themſelves to be agreeably deceived, they forgot that the high-wrought ſcene was fictitious, and entered into the intereſts and paſſions of the perſons repreſented with real emotion. This alſo required a different conduct in the Tragic and the Epic Poet: the province of the latter is to inſtruct and delight; and he marches on to his end with a majeſtic pace thro' the extenſive regions of moral, paſſion, and deſcription: Æſchylus perceived that the Drama is confined to one point of place, and one point of time; that therefore its buſineſs is to advance with rapidity, and ſeize the heart at once: the paſſions then are its peculiar province. It is finely conceived by P. Brumoy that Æſchylus repreſented

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the Epos to his mind as a majeſtic queen ſeated on her throne, her brow ſhaded with clouds, but ſo as to diſcover great deſigns and wonderful revolutions: whilſt his ſtrong imagination figured tragedy as bathed in tears, her poignard in her hand, attended by terror and pity, preceded by deſpair, and followed by woe.

This great maſter was well acquainted with the human heart; he found it more averſe to miſery than deſirous of happineſs, and tremblingly alive to the ſhocks of fear, that gives us continual notice of the evils inſeparable from human life. Cloſely allied to this paſſion is another, that makes the heart recoil at the ſight of thoſe miſeries which befall another, and to which we are ourſelves equally liable. Terror and pity then are the ſtrongeſt, the moſt common, and therefore the moſt dangerous of all the paſſions; they overwhelm the human heart, render it incapable of bearing up againſt the repeated impreſſions of ills, and of diſcharging with a proper degree of firmneſs the neceſſary duties of life. To *purge* theſe paſſions, to take away their pernicious qualities, and preſerve whatever they have of uſefull, is the buſineſs in common of the philoſopher and the poet; but theſe effect their ends by different means; the

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former applies himſelf to the underſtanding by the cool deductions of reaſon; the poet plays the paſſions againſt themſelves, expells terror by terror, and pity by pity, and makes the weapon, that gave the wound, perform the cure. The evils, of which we are either ſpectators or ſufferers in the larger theatre of human life, ſtrike the heart with a terror that cruſhes all its powers, or with a pity that diſſolves them: but in the mimic ſcene the poet by captivating the imagination has the addreſs to convey certain ſenſations of pleaſure, of which we cannot diveſt ourſelves, and thereby intereſts our attention to the fictitious ſcenes, ſpreading over the ſoul that moſt exquiſite of all its feelings, a calm dignity of grief that at once chaſtiſes and refines it, and thereby teaching the heart to ſupport its own afflictions with a manly fortitude, or to feel for the afflictions of others with a ſenſibility corrected by reaſon. Theſe are ſo evidently the effects of the antient Drama, that they are from thence deduced as rules for its conſtruction; and to refuſe the great poet the honour of having this deſign in the plan of his tragedies, would be as violent an injuſtice as to deny that * the great painter, when he delineated

* Mr. Weſt, in his picture of the death of General Wolf.

neated the dying hero, intended to impreſs us with a reverence of his unſhaken fortitude, and to awake in our breaſts the paſſions of admiration, love, pity, and grief, which are ſo ſtrongly marked in the countenances and attitudes of his ſurrounding friends.

Thus tragedy owes its exiſtence to the creative hand of Æſchylus: like his own Prometheus, he not only gave it being and form, but animated it with the brighteſt ray of ætherial fire; leaving poſterity to admire the force of his genius, and to doubt whether he was ever excelled, or even equalled, till our Shakeſpear aroſe bleſſed with an happier invention and more extenſive powers. It is pleaſant however to obſerve in what manner ſome writers, who would take it ill to be denied the firſt rank in criticiſm, ſpeak of this author. Sublimity of conception, magnificence of ſtyle, and the high tragic ſpirit they graciouſly allow him; in this they ſafely build upon the judgement of Longinus, Horace, and Quintilian, from whence there is no appeal: the ſame judgement had alſo pronounced him ſometimes harſh and incorrect; and ſo, without adverting to the meaning of theſe great critics, that Longinus is ſpeaking of the boldneſs of his imagery, and Quintilian,

as if commenting on Horace, of his ſtile, which had not yet acquired its juſt accuracy and correctneſs, they carry the cenſure into the compoſition of his tragedies, which they repreſent as wild, irregular, and frequently fantaſtic; his plots, as rude and inartificial; his ſcenes, as unconnected and ill-placed; his characters, as ſtrongly marked, but *all* partaking of that wild fierceneſs which is the characteriſtic of the author. Some, and amongſt theſe are the beſt French critics, repreſent him as difficult, obſcure, and in ſome places ſcarcely to be underſtood: Another tells us that his thoughts riſe in a natural ſucceſſion; that inſtead of being perplexed, one runs along with him, nay often before him: We are indeed gravely recommended to take his ſoul and genius, in ſome degree, along with us; that does not fall to the ſhare of every reader, nor of every critic; but to an Acumen, that finds no obſcurity in Lycophron, no wonder that Æſchylus is even familiar.

The amiable candor of a fine writer, who has joined an accurate taſte to the deepeſt penetration, and the fineſt ſenſibility to the moſt chaſtiſed judgement, teaches us thus to apologize for heaven-born genius, that acts from ſome-

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thing ſuperior and antecedent to rules: "Great indulgence "is due to the errors of original writers, who, quitting the "beaten track which others have travelled, make daring "incurſions into unexplored regions of invention, and "boldly ſtrike into the pathleſs ſublime: it is no wonder "if they are often bewildered, ſometimes benighted: yet "ſurely it is more eligible to partake the pleaſure and the "hazard of their adventures, than ſtill to follow the cau-"tious ſteps of timid imitators through trite and common "roads. Genius is of a bold enterpriſing nature, ill "adapted to the formal reſtraints of critic inſtitutions, or "indeed to lay down to itſelf rules of nice diſcretion."—*Eſſay on the writings and genius of Shakeſpear.*——But even this generous apology is ſeldom wanted for Æſchylus, except in his tragedy of Prometheus: there indeed the poet has given free ſcope to his unbounded imagination, and exerted the ſtrength and ardor of his genius with a wild and terrible magnificence; the limits of this world were not ſufficient for his extenſive and daring ſpirit, but it made excurſions beyond the walks of mortal man: each perſonated character is a Divinity, and the illuſtrious ſufferer an antient God of the high and haughty race of

Titan,

Titan, unworthily puniſhed for his benevolence, and præſcient that no ſubmiſſion could mitigate the ſeverity of his fate; here that horrid grandeur of the ſcene has a peculiar propriety; and the reader of taſte does not wiſh to ſee Prometheus abate any thing of that unconquerable ſpirit, with which he defies the Thunderer. In Æſchylus the ſublime is truely expreſſive of the elevation of his mind: born with a ſoul of fire, and animated with whatever is great and noble, all his ideas are magnificent and full of energy; what he conceived boldly he expreſſed with a correſpondent dignity of ſtile; as his judgement informed him that manners in Tragedy would admit a ſtronger colouring than in the Epos, becauſe there every thing ſpeaks to the eye and the heart, ſo he gave it at once an higher tone and greater pomp of diction; this *perhaps* he has carried to an exceſs; his epithets are ſometimes harſh and turgid, and by endevoring always to ſupport an elevation of ſtile he has rendered it what P. Brumoy well expreſſes by "quelquefois giganteſque." But this is to be underſtood only of his diction: his images, with all their magnificence, never overſtep the modeſty of nature; they are indeed conceived with that inimitable fire, and expreſſed

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with ſuch a daring ſublimity, that it requires no ſmall portion of the high poetic ſpirit to attend him thro' his boundleſs flights; and this is one principal reaſon of that obſcurity which is complained of in his choral Odes: but to aſſert from hence that his figures often obſcure his ſenſe rather than enlighten it, is to ſpeak the language of taſteleſs criticiſm, that meditates its frigid lucubrations over the midnight lamp, leaving true genius, like the eagle, to ſoar undazzled by the blazing ſun when he "glows with unmi-
"tigated day."

We have lately been told that if we conſider the ſtate of the Drama, when Æſchylus undertook to reform and improve it, we ſhall behold him with admiration; if we compare him with his two illuſtrious ſucceſſors, he hides his diminiſhed head, and appears far leſs conſpicuous. But this judgement was unknown to antient Greece: the ſtate of Athens paid honours to Æſchylus, which never were granted to any other poet: Ariſtophanes, who certainly was not deficient in taſte, gave the preference to Æſchylus; and Lycurgus, to whom the poetic world is ſo greatly indebted, erected ſtatues alike to Æſchylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and ordered their tragedies to be tranſcribed

and preſerved together. In pronouncing on their comparative merit, the beſt critics aſſign to Æſchylus the high tragic dignity, to Sophocles harmonious elegance, to Euripides the moral and pathetic. As the temper of the times muſt always have a great influence on the genius of their poets, we may in ſome meaſure account for this difference of character from the different ſtate of Athens in the periods when theſe three great writers compoſed their tragedies; for tho' they were cotemporaries, that is were all alive at the ſame time, yet the circumſtances of the public had in that ſhort time received a very conſiderable change. Whilſt Æſchylus was in the vigor of his age, the generous glow of liberty and the high martial ſpirit blazed out with the brighteſt ardor; it was ſucceſsfull; and Athens was the proud ſcene of conqueſts, glories, triumphs, ſpoils: Æſchylus had borne an active and honorable part in theſe great engagements; his genius was naturally ſublime and daring; the ſpirit of the times called forth the ſpirit of the poet, was highly flattered by it, and in return received it with the greateſt pleaſure and warmeſt applauſe.—The penetrating writer before cited in apologizing for the irregularities of Shakeſpear, has this fine remark,

mark, "If perfect and faultleſs compoſition is ever to be "expected from human faculties, it muſt be at ſome happy "period, when a noble and gracefull ſimplicity, the reſult "of well regulated and ſober magnanimity, reigns through "the general manners. Then the Muſes and the Arts, "neither effeminately delicate, nor audaciouſly bold, aſ- "ſume their higheſt character, and in all their compoſiti- "ons ſeem to reſpect the chaſtity of the public taſte, which "would equally diſdain quaintneſs of ornament, or the "rude neglect of elegance and decorum. Such periods "had Greece!" And ſuch was the preciſe period in which Sophocles wrote: the high national ſpirit had as yet ſuffered no abatement; but the war had now nothing dangerous or peculiarly intereſting in it; and Athens was at leiſure to cultivate the fine arts with a greater degree of exactneſs, and to give them a poliſh and perfection unknown to more buſy and tumultuous times: hence the correct and elegant Sophocles. The Athenians had now an opportunity in the calm of peace to enjoy the riches which they had acquired in the Perſian war; nor were they of a diſpoſition to neglect the enjoyment: this of courſe brought on a greater refinement of taſte, and a ſofter

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delicacy of ſentiment; but the antient ſimplicity of manners was not yet corrupted; it only became more elegant, and formed the pathetic Euripides, the greateſt maſter of the tender paſſions: and happily for the cauſe of virtue the chaſt and philoſophic friend of Socrates might well be truſted with his empire over them. If then the glorious ſcenes of war and conqueſt were peculiarly favorable to the bold and firey genius of Æſchylus, "the period, when Sophocles and Euripides wrote, was that in which the fine arts and polite literature were in a degree of perfection, which ſucceeding ages have emulated in vain," till an amiable writer of our own, by an happy effort of "heaven-born genius" regulated by the moſt chaſtiſed judgement, united the powers of the three illuſtrious Grecians, and has charmed us with the tenderneſs of Euripides in Elfrida, with the force of Æſchylus and the correctneſs and harmony of Sophocles in Caractacus, adding from his own ſtores a richneſs and a grace with which the ſeverity of the Athenian Drama was unacquainted.

Notwithſtanding the acknowledged merit of this truely original writer, he ſeems to have been little ſtudied even by the learned of theſe later ages: of all our other poets

Milton

Milton and Mr. Gray are the only two that have imitated his manner, and caught the fire of his genius; unleſs we may add to them our ſublime Collins. A minute examination of the particular images, which theſe noble writers may ſeem to have glanced at in Æſchylus, would be equally uncandid and invidious; it is more agreeable and more juſt to obſerve that from whatever ſparks they kindled "the Muſes Veſtal Fires," they had genius of their own to "fan them to that dazzling blaze of ſong," which muſt always make them the glory of Engliſh Poetry.

Thoſe who are beſt acquainted with Æſchylus in the original language, will be moſt ſenſible of the difficulties of preſenting him properly to the Engliſh reader; the Tranſlator ſaw and felt them enough. In a language, that has ſo long ceaſed to be ſpoken, many peculiar elegances muſt eſcape even thoſe that read it with the greateſt accuracy; and many of thoſe, which are obſerved, will neceſſarily loſe the richneſs of their colouring, when copied into another language: and this muſt always be the caſe where the whole beauty depends upon the choice and arrangement of words and ſyllables conſtituting an inimitable harmony of expreſſion. "Un tour en toute langue

" (ſays the excellent Brumoy) vaut ſouvent une penſée, et " en eſt véritablement une. Mais c'eſt une mane qui fond, " une phantôm qui s' evanoüit, ou du moins une fleur qui " ſe fanne dans une langue étrangére." There are many inſtances of this in the choral Odes: theſe too are often ſo difficult, that the Tranſlator cannot flatter himſelf that he has always reached the preciſe meaning of the original, tho' directed by the penetrating ſagacity of the very learned Pauw, to whom he moſt gratefully acknowledges the higheſt obligations: and, what is particularly to be lamented, even theſe ſmall remains of Æſchylus have come down to us ſo injured by the depredations of time, that in many paſſages the happieſt conjecture is the beſt criticiſm. Yet the Tranſlator was not diſcouraged: he had an ambition to preſent this noble author to the Engliſh reader, and flattered himſelf that his attempt would be acceptable to the public: animated with this pleaſing hope he undertook and went thro' the arduous work; but when he reflects upon the generous encouragement he has met with from ſo many perſons of the higheſt rank, as well as of the firſt reputation in literature, he thinks it the trueſt mark of reſpect, and the beſt thanks for the honour they have

have done him, to assure them that he trembles whilst he publishes what he wrote with ardor; trembles lest the translation should be false to his own wishes, and unworthy of their patronage: his wishes are to please; and in a work of such difficulty there is some degree of merit even in the attempt; and this is all he presumes to claim. Should he however be so happy as to succeed, and be thought to deserve the approbation of the public, to which he now with the greatest diffidence appeals, this will animate him with the most sanguine hope of further success in the long promised translation of Euripides; to that he now returns. If an apology for these studies be necessary in respect to his years and profession, he begs leave to make it in the words of Tully, " Ego vero fateor, me his studiis esse deditum. Ceteros pudeat, siqui ita se litteris abdiderunt, ut nihil possint ex his neque ad communem afferre fructum, neque in adspectum lucemque proferre. Me autem quid pudeat, qui tot annos ita vivo, ut ab nullius unquam me tempore aut commodum, aut otium meum abstraxerit, aut Voluptas avocarit, aut denique Somnus retardarit? Quare quis tandem me reprehendat, aut quis mihi jure succensеat, si, quantum ceteris ad suas res obeundas,

das, quantum ad feſtos dies ludorum celebrandos, quantum ad alias Voluptates, et ad ipſam requiem animi et corporis conceditur temporum: quantum alii tribuunt tempeſtivis conviviis: quantum denique aleæ, quantum pilæ; tantum mihi egomet ad hæc ſtudia recolenda ſumpero?"——PRO ARCHIA POETA.

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Thomas Tyrwhitt, Eſq;
Rev. Robert Tyrwhitt, M. A. Fellow of Jeſus College, Cambridge

Hon. Mrs. Raby Vane
Hon. Frederic Vane

Lord Viſcount Weymouth
Right Hon. Lord Willoughby de Broke
Right Hon. Lord Walpole
Right Hon. Lord Wenman
Hon. Horatio Walpole, Son of Lord Walpole
Hon. Thomas Wenman
Sir Armine Wodehouſe, Bart. deceaſed. 10 books
Sir John Wodehouſe, Bart. 5 books
Lady Wodehouſe. 5 books
Dowager Lady Williams Wynn
Thomas Walker, Eſq; Woodſtock
Mr. Walker, Emanuel College, Cambridge
Rev. Mr. Wallace, Fellow of Corpus Chriſti College, Cambridge
Richard Waller, Eſq; Ireland
Rev. Dr. Warton, Maſter of Wincheſter College
Rev. Thomas Warton, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford
Rev. Mr. Walſby, Fellow of Corpus Chriſti College, Cambridge
Rev. John Watts, Rector of Aſhill
Nicolas Webb, Eſq; Feltham Hill
William Weddell, Eſq;
Rev. Dr. Wheeler, Canon of Chriſt Church, Regius Profeſſor of Divinity, Oxford
Thomas Lucas Wheeler, Eſq; Fellow Commoner of Trinity College, Cambridge
Samuel Whitbread, Eſq;
Mr. White, bookſeller, Fleet-ſtreet
William Whitehead, Eſq; Poet Laureate
Rev. Mr. Whitley, St. Aſaph
Mr. James Wickham, Frome
Mr. Wigget, Norwich
John Hanbury Williams, Eſq; Ruſſel-ſtreet, Bath
Rev. Henry Williams, Chaplain to the 46th Regiment of Foot
Rev. John Wilſon, Chaplain to the 22d Regiment of Foot
William Windham, Eſq;
Rev. Philip Wodehouſe. 5 books
Thomas Wodehouſe, Eſq;
Mr. Wodhull, Berkely-ſquare
Rev. Francis Wollaſton, L.L.B. F.R.S. Præcentor of St. David's
Rev. Mr. Wood, Cheſterfield
Mr. Woodbine, Yarmouth
Richard Woodeſon, Eſq; Vinerian Profeſſor of Law, Oxford
Rev. Mr. Woodforde, Rector of Weſton
Miſs Woolley, Ireland
Rev. Mr. Wythe, Fellow of Caius College, Camb.

Hon. John Yorke
Sir George Yonge, Bart.
G. H. Dobyns Yate, Eſq; St. John's Coll. Oxford
Rev. Dr. Young, Prebendary of Weſtminſter
Rev. Mr. Youngſon

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# ERRATA.

Preface ult. read ſumpſero. p. 7, l. 3, read meed. p. 18, l. 7, after myſelf, mark a comma. p. 28, l. 17, after chain, mark a comma. p. 29, l. 5, for depths, read realms. p. 58, l. 11, for now, read new. Pref. to Supplicants, l. 3, read daughters. l. 13, read ſimplicity. p. 74, l. 10, read her fav'rite. p. 78, l. 20, read oar. p. 85, l. 15, read fire. p. 102, l. 9. after people, mark a comma. p. 128, l. 4, dele ----. p. 204, l. 9, for vengeance, read diſcord. p. 218, l. 19, for the, read thy. p. 249, after line 16, for Chorus, read Herald. p. 255, l. 8, read heart-felt. p. 298, l. 18, read thee. p. 342, l. 13, read, Where, King of Heav'n, where. p. 369, l. 12, read haſt. p. 436, l. 5, read invincible. p. 449, l. 12, after hail, mark ! p. 463, l. 16, read Tmolus. p. 468, l. 1, after breaſt, dele comma. p. 469, l. 18, read ſhines.

# PROMETHEUS CHAIN'D.

# PROMETHEUS CHAIN'D.

# PROMETHEUS CHAIN'D.

ÆSCHYLUS wrote three Tragedies on the ſtory of Prometheus: the firſt exhibited him as carrying the ſacred gift of fire to men; the ſecond as chained to Caucaſus; the third as delivered from his chains. Of theſe the ſecond only remains to us. The ſhort account, which Prometheus gives in this of the barbarous ſtate of man before he taught them the civilizing arts, makes us regret the loſs of the firſt; and we have good reaſon to imagine that the portrait of Hercules in the third, delineated by this great maſter, muſt have been inimitable. There is in this remaining drama a ſublimity of conception, a ſtrength, a fire, a certain ſavage dignity peculiar to this bold writer. The ſcenery is the greateſt that the human imagination ever formed: the wild and deſolate rock frowning over the ſea, the ſtern and imperious ſons of Pallas and Styx holding up Prometheus to its rifted ſide whilſt Vulcan fixes his chains, the Nymphs of the Ocean flying to its ſummit to commiſerate his unhappy ſtate, old Oceanus on his hippogriff, the appearance of Io, the deſcent of Mercury, the whirlwind tearing up the ſands, ſwelling the boiſterous ſea, and daſhing its waves to the ſtars, the vollied thunders rolling all their firey rage againſt the rock, and the figure of Prometheus unappalled at this terrible ſtorm, and bidding defiance to Jupiter, would require the utmoſt effort of Salvator Roſa's genius to repreſent them. Yet is the horrid greatneſs of this drama tempered with much tenderneſs; the reluctance of Vulcan to execute the ſevere commands of Jupiter is finely contraſted to the eager unfeeling inſolence of Strength and Force; the character of Io is mournfully gentle; and the Oceanitidæ are of a moſt amiable mildneſs joined to a firm but modeſt prudence; even the untameable ferocity of Prometheus diſcovers under it a benevolence that intereſts us deeply in his ſufferings.

# Perſons of the Drama.

STRENGTH and FORCE.

VULCAN.

PROMETHEUS.

OCEANUS.

IO.

MERCURY.

CHORUS,

NYMPHS OF THE OCEAN.

# PROMETHEUS CHAIN'D.

STRENGTH, FORCE, VULCAN, PROMETHEUS.

STRENGTH.

AT length then to the wide earth's extreme bounds,
To Scythia are we come, thoſe pathleſs wilds
Where human footſtep never mark'd the ground.
Now, Vulcan, to thy taſk; at Jove's command
Fix to theſe high-projecting rocks this vain
Artificer of man; each maſſy link
Draw cloſe, and bind his adamantine chains.
Thy radiant pride, the firey flame, that lends
Its aid to ev'ry art, he ſtole, and bore
The gift to mortals; for which bold offence
The gods aſſign him this juſt puniſhment;

That

That he may learn to reverence the pow'r
Of Jove, and moderate his love to man.

VULCAN.

Stern pow'rs, your harſh commands have here an end,
Nor find reſiſtance: My leſs hardy mind,
Averſe to violence, ſhrinks back, and dreads
To bind a kindred god to this wild cliff,
Expos'd to ev'ry ſtorm: but ſtrong conſtraint
Compells me; I muſt ſteel my ſoul, and dare:
Jove's high commands require a prompt obſervance.
High-thoughted ſon of truth-directing Themis,
Thee with indiſſoluble chains, perforce,
Muſt I now rivet to this ſavage rock,
Where neither human voice, nor human form
Shall meet thine eye, but parching in the beams,
Unſhelter'd, of yon' fervid ſun, thy bloom
Shall loſe its grace, and make thee wiſh th' approach
Of grateful evening mild, whoſe duſky ſtole
Spangled with gems ſhall veil his firey heat;
And night upon the whitening ground breathe frore,
But ſoon to melt, touch'd by his orient ray.
So ſhall ſome preſent ill with varied pain

Afflict thee; nor is he yet born, whose hand
Shall set thee free: thus thy humanity
Receives its mead, that thou, a god, regardless
Of the god's anger, honouredst mortal man
With courtesies, which justice not approves.
Therefore the joyless station of this rock
Unsleeping, unreclining, shalt thou keep,
And many' a groan, many' a loud lament
Throw out in vain, nor move the rig'rous breast
Of Jove, relentless in his youthful pow'r.

STRENGTH.

No more: why these delays, this foolish pity?
Dost thou not hate a god by gods abhor'd,
That prostitutes thy radiant boast to man?

VULCAN.

Strong are the ties of kindred and long converse.

STRENGTH.

Well: but to disobey thy sire's commands,
Darest thou do that? Is not that fear more strong?

VULCAN.

Soft pity never touch'd thy ruthless mind.

STRENGTH.

STRENGTH.

Will thy vain pity bring relief? Forbear,
Nor waſte thyſelf in what avails not him.

VULCAN.

Abhor'd be all the fine ſkill of my hands.

STRENGTH.

And why abhor'd? For of theſe preſent toils
Thy art, in very truth, is not the cauſe.

VULCAN.

Yet wiſh I it had been ſome other's lot.

STRENGTH.

All have their lot appointed, ſave to reign
In heav'n, for liberty is Jove's alone.

VULCAN.

Truth guides thy words, nor have I to gainſay.

STRENGTH.

Why thus reluctant then to bind his chains?
Let not thy ſire obſerve theſe ſlow delays.

VULCAN.

The manacles are ready, thou mayſt ſee them.

STRENGTH.

Bind them around his hands; with all thy force

Strike, nail them faſt, drive them into the rock.

VULCAN.

Thus far the work is finiſh'd, and not ſlightly.

STRENGTH.

Strike harder, ſtrain them, let them not relax;
His craft will work unthought of ways t' eſcape.

VULCAN.

This arm too is inextricably fix'd.

STRENGTH.

And now claſp this ſecure, that he may learn
How impotent his craft, oppos'd to Jove.

VULCAN.

This work he only can with juſtice blame.

STRENGTH.

Acroſs his breaſt draw now this ſtubborn bar
Of adamant, fix firm its ſharpen'd point.

VULCAN.

Thy miſeries, Prometheus, I bewail.

STRENGTH.

Still doſt thou linger? Still bewail the foes
Of Jove? Take heed leſt thou bewail thyſelf.

VULCAN.

Thou ſeeſt an object horrible to ſight.

STRENGTH.

I ſee him honour'd as his deeds deſerve.
But haſte thee, fix this ſtrong habergeon on him.

VULCAN.

Conſtraint lies on me; urge not thou its rigor.

STRENGTH.

Urge thee? I will, and in an higher tone.
Downwards; with all thy force enring his legs.

VULCAN.

This too is finiſh'd, with no ling'ring ſpeed.

STRENGTH.

Strike hard, drive deep their penetrating points.
Severe his eye, who nicely ſcans theſe works.

VULCAN.

Thy voice is harſh, and rugged as thy form.

STRENGTH.

Now fair befall thy ſoftneſs; yet upbraid not
My ruder and unpitying ruthleſsneſs.

VULCAN.

Let us be gone: the rig'rous taſk is done.

STRENGTH.

STRENGTH.

Now triumph in thy inſolence; now ſteal
The glory of the gods, and bear the gift
To mortal man: will they relieve thee now?
Falſe is the boaſted prudence of thy name,
Or wanted now to free thee from thy fate.

PROMETHEUS, alone.

Ætherial air, and ye ſwift-winged winds,
Ye rivers ſpringing from freſh founts, ye waves
That o'er th' interminable ocean wreath
Your criſped ſmiles, thou all-producing earth,
And thee, bright ſun, I call, whoſe flaming orb
Views the wide world beneath, ſee what, a god,
I ſuffer from the gods; with what fierce pains,
Behold, what tortures for revolving ages
I here muſt ſtruggle; ſuch unſeemly chains
This new-rais'd ruler of the gods devis'd.
Ah me! That groan burſts from my anguiſh'd heart,
My preſent woes and future to bemoan.
When ſhall theſe ſuff'rings find their deſtin'd end?
But why that vain inquiry? My clear ſight
Looks through the future; unforeſeen no ill

Shall come on me: behoves me then to bear
Patient my deſtin'd fate, knowing how vain
To ſtruggle with neceſſity's ſtrong pow'r.
But to complain, or not complain, alike
Is unavailable. For favours ſhown
To mortal man I bear this weight of woe;
Hid in an hollow cane the fount of fire
I privately convey'd, of ev'ry art
Productive, and the nobleſt gift to men.
And for this ſlight offence, woe, woe is me!
I bear theſe chains, fix'd to this ſavage rock,
Unſhelter'd from th' inclemencies of th' air.
Ah me! what ſound, what ſoftly-breathing odour
Steals on my ſenſe? Be you immortal gods,
Or mortal men, or of th' heroic race,
Whoe'er have reach'd this wild rock's extreme cliff,
Spectators of my woes, or what your purpoſe,
Ye ſee me bound, a wretched god, abhor'd
By Jove, and ev'ry god that treads his courts,
For my fond love to man. Ah me! again
I hear the ſound of flutt'ring nigh; the air
Pants to the ſoft beat of light-moving wings:
All, that approaches now, is dreadful to me.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Forbear thy fears: a friendly train
On buſy pennons flutt'ring light,
We come, our ſire not aſk'd in vain,
And reach this promontory's height.
The clanging iron's horrid ſound
Re-echo'd thro' our caves profound;
And tho' my cheek glows with ſhame's crimſon dye,
Thus with unſandal'd foot with winged ſpeed I fly.

PROMETHEUS.

Ah me! Ah me!
Ye virgin ſiſters, who derive your race
From fruitful Thetis, and th' embrace
Of old Oceanus, your ſire, that rolls
Around the wide world his unquiet waves,
This way turn your eyes, behold
With what a chain fix'd to this rugged ſteep
Th' unenvied ſtation of the rock I keep.

CHORUS.

I ſee, I ſee; and o'er my eyes,
Surcharg'd with ſorrow's tearful rain,

Dark'ning

Dark'ning the miſty clouds ariſe;
I ſee thy adamantine chain;
In its ſtrong graſp thy limbs confin'd,
And withering in the parching wind:
Such the ſtern pow'r of heav'n's new-ſceptred lord,
And law-controlling Jove's irrevocable word.

PROMETHEUS.

Beneath the earth,
Beneath the gulfs of Tartarus, that ſpread
Interminable o'er the dead,
Had his ſtern fury fix'd this rigid chain,
Nor gods, nor men had triumph'd in my pain.
But pendent in th' ætherial air,
The pageant gratifies my ruthleſs foes,
That gaze, inſult, and glory in my woes.

CHORUS.

Is there a god, whoſe ſullen ſoul
Feels a ſtern joy in thy deſpair?
Owns he not pity's ſoft controul,
And drops in ſympathy the tear?
All, all, ſave Jove; with fury driv'n
Severe he tames the ſons of heav'n;

And

And he will tame them, till ſome pow'r ariſe
To wreſt from his ſtrong hand the ſceptre of the ſkies.

PROMETHEUS.

Yet he, e'en he,
That o'er the gods holds his deſpotic reign,
And fixes this diſgraceful chain,
Shall need my aid, the counſils to diſcloſe
Deſtructive to his honour and his throne.
But not the honied blandiſhment, that flows
From his alluring lips, ſhall ought avail;
His rigid menaces ſhall fail;
Nor will I make the fatal ſecret known,
Till his proud hands this galling chain unbind,
And his remorſe ſooths my indignant mind.

CHORUS.

Bold and intrepid is thy ſoul,
Fir'd with reſentment's warmeſt glow;
And thy free voice diſdains controul,
Diſdains the tort'ring curb of woe.
My ſofter boſom, thrill'd with fear
Leſt heavier ills await thee here,
By milder counſils wiſhes thee repoſe:
For Jove's relentleſs rage no tender pity knows.

PROMETHEUS.

Stern tho' he be,
And, in the pride of pow'r terrific dreſt,
Rears o'er inſulted right his creſt,
Yet gentler thoughts ſhall mitigate his ſoul,
When o'er his head this ſtorm ſhall roll;
Then ſhall his ſtubborn indignation bend,
Submit to ſue, and court me for a friend.

CHORUS.

But ſay, relate at large for what offence
Committed doth the wrath of Jove inflict
This puniſhment ſo ſhameful, ſo ſevere:
Inſtruct us, if the tale ſhocks not thy ſoul.

PROMETHEUS.

'Tis painful to relate it, to be ſilent
Is pain: each circumſtance is full of woe.
When ſtern debate amongſt the gods appear'd,
And diſcord in the courts of heav'n was rous'd;
Whilſt againſt Saturn ſome conſpiring will'd
To pluck him from the throne, that Jove might reign;
And ſome, averſe, with ardent zeal oppos'd
Jove's riſing pow'r and empire o'er the gods;

My

My counſils, tho' diſcreeteſt, wiſeſt, beſt,
Mov'd not the Titans, thoſe impetuous ſons
Of Ouranus and Terra, whoſe high ſpirits,
Diſdaining milder meaſures, proudly ween'd
To ſeize by force the ſceptre of the ſky.
Oft did my goddeſs mother, Themis now,
Now Gaia, under various names deſign'd,
Herſelf the ſame, foretell me the event,
That not by violence, that not by pow'r,
But gentler arts, the royalty of heav'n
Muſt be obtain'd. Whilſt thus my voice advis'd,
Their headlong rage deign'd me not e'en a look.
What then could wiſdom dictate, but to take
My mother, and with voluntary aid
Abet the cauſe of Jove? Thus by my counſils
In the dark deep Tartarean gulph enclos'd
Old Saturn lies, and his confederate pow'rs.
For theſe good deeds the tyrant of the ſkies
Repays me with theſe dreadful puniſhments.
For foul miſtruſt of thoſe that ſerve them beſt
Breathes its black poiſon in each tyrant's heart.
Aſk you the cauſe for which he tortures me?

I will declare it. On his father's throne
Scarce was he ſeated, on the chiefs of heav'n
He ſhow'r'd his various honours; thus confirming
His royalty; but for unhappy mortals
Had no regard, and all the preſent race
Will'd to extirpate, and to form a new.
None, ſave myſelf oppos'd his will; I dar'd;
And boldly pleading ſav'd them from deſtruction,
Sav'd them from ſinking to the realms of night.
For this offence I bend beneath theſe pains,
Dreadful to ſuffer, piteous to behold:
For mercy to mankind I am not deem'd
Worthy of mercy; but with ruthleſs hate
In this uncouth appointment am fix'd here
A ſpectacle diſhonorable to Jove.

CHORUS.

Of iron is he form'd and adamant,
Whoſe breaſt with ſocial ſorrow does not melt
At thy afflictions: I nor wiſh'd to ſee them,
Nor ſee them but with anguiſh at my heart.

PROMETHEUS.

It is a ſight that ſtrikes my friends with pity.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

But had th' offence no further aggravation?

PROMETHEUS.

I hid from men the foreſight of their fate.

CHORUS.

What cou'dſt thou find to remedy that ill?

PROMETHEUS.

I ſent blind Hope t' inhabit in their hearts.

CHORUS.

A bleſſing haſt thou given to mortal man.

PROMETHEUS.

Nay more, with generous zeal I gave them Fire.

CHORUS.

Do mortals now enjoy the blazing gift?

PROMETHEUS.

And by it ſhall give birth to various arts.

CHORUS.

For ſuch offences doth the wrath of Jove
Thus puniſh thee, relaxing nought of pain?
And is no bound preſcrib'd to thy affliction?

PROMETHEUS.

None elſe, but when his own will ſhall incline him.

CHORUS.

Who ſhall incline his will? Haſt thou no hope?
Doſt thou not ſee that thou haſt much offended?
But to point out th' offence to me were painful,
And might ſound harſh to thee: forbear we then;
Bethink thee how thy ills may find an end.

PROMETHEUS.

How eaſy, when the foot is not entangled
In miſery's thorny maze, to give monitions
And precepts to th' afflicted! Of theſe things
I was not unadvis'd; and my offence
Was voluntary; in man's cauſe I drew
Theſe evils on my head: but ills like theſe,
On this aerial rock to waſte away,
This deſart and unſocial precipice,
My mind preſag'd it not. But ceaſe your grief,
Wail not my preſent woes; on the rough point
Of this firm cliff deſcend, and there obſerve
What further may betide me, e'en the whole
Of my hard fate; indulge me, O indulge
This my requeſt, and ſympathize with me
Thus wretched; for affliction knows no reſt,

But

But rolls from breaſt to breaſt its vagrant tide.

CHORUS.

Not to th' unwilling are thy words directed.
With light foot now this nimble-moving ſeat,
This pure air, thro' whoſe liquid fields the birds
Winnow their wanton way, I leave; and now
Alight I on this rude and craggy rock,
Anxious to hear all thy unhappy tale.

OCEANUS, PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

OCEANUS.

Far diſtant, thro' the vaſt expanſe of air,
To thee, Prometheus, on this ſwift-wing'd ſteed,
Whoſe neck unrein'd obeys my will, I come,
In ſocial ſorrow ſympathizing with thee.
To this the near affinity of blood
Moves me; and be aſſur'd, that tie apart,
There is not who can tax my dear regard
Deeper than thou: believe me, this is truth,
Not the falſe glozings of a flatt'ring tongue.
Inſtruct me then in what my pow'r may ſerve thee,
For never ſhalt thou ſay thou haſt a friend
More firm, more conſtant than Oceanus.

PROMETHEUS.

PROMETHEUS.

Ah me! What draws thee hither? Art thou come
Spectator of my toils? How haſt thou ventur'd
To leave the ocean waves, from thee ſo call'd,
Thy rock-roof'd grottos arch'd by nature's hand,
And land upon this iron-teeming earth?
Comeſt thou to viſit and bewail my ills?
Behold this ſight, behold this friend of Jove,
Th' aſſertor of his empire, bending here
Beneath a weight of woes by him inflicted.

OCEANUS.

I ſee it all, and wiſh to counſil thee,
Wiſe as thou art, to milder meaſures: learn
To know thyſelf; new model thy behaviour,
As the new monarch of the gods requires.
What if thy harſh and pointed ſpeech ſhou'd reach
The ear of Jove, tho' on his diſtant throne
High-ſeated, might they not inflame his rage
T' inflict ſuch tortures, that thy preſent pains
Might ſeem a recreation and a ſport?
Ceaſe then, unhappy ſufferer, ceaſe thy braves,
And meditate the means of thy deliverance.

To thee perchance this ſeems the cold advice
Of doting age; yet,, truſt me, woes like theſe
Are earnings of the lofty-ſounding tongue.
But thy unbending ſpirit diſdains to yield
E'en to afflictions, to the preſent rather
Ambitious to add more. Yet ſhalt thou not,
If my voice may be heard, lift up thy heel
To kick againſt the pricks; ſo rough, thou ſeeſt,
So uncontroul'd the monarch of the ſkies.
But now I go, and will exert my pow'r,
If haply I may free thee from thy pains.
Mean while be calm; forbear this haughty tone:
Has not thy copious wiſdom taught thee this,
That miſchief ſtill attends the petulant tongue?

PROMETHEUS.

I gratulate thy fortune, that on thee
No blame hath lighted, tho' aſſociate with me
In all, and daring equally. But now
Forbear, of my condition take no care;
Thou wilt not move him; nothing moves his rigor:
Take heed then, leſt to go brings harm on thee.

OCEANUS.

OCEANUS.

Wiſer for others than thyſelf I find
Thy thoughts; yet ſhalt thou not withhold my ſpeed.
And I have hopes, with pride I ſpeak it, hopes
T' obtain this grace, and free thee from thy ſufferings.

PROMETHEUS.

For this thou haſt my thanks; thy courteſy
With grateful memory ever ſhall be honour'd.
But think not of it, the attempt were vain,
Nor wou'd thy labour profit me; ceaſe then,
And leave me to my fate: however wretched,
I wiſh not to impart my woes to others.

OCEANUS.

No; for thy brother's fate, th' unhappy Atlas,
Afflicts me: on the weſtern ſhore he ſtands,
Supporting on his ſhoulders the vaſt pillar
Of Heav'n and Earth, a weight of cumbrous graſp.
Him too, the dweller of Cilicia's caves,
I ſaw, with pity ſaw, Earth's monſtrous ſon,
With all his hundred heads ſubdued by Force,
The furious Typhon, who 'gainſt all the gods
Made war; his horrid jaws with ſerpent-hiſs

Breath'd

Breath'd ſlaughter, from his eyes the gorgon-glare
Of balefull lightnings flaſh'd, as his proud force
Wou'd rend from Jove his empire of the ſky.
But him the vengefull bolt, inſtinct with fire,
Smote ſore, and daſh'd him from his haughty vaunts,
Pierc'd thro' his ſoul, and wither'd all his ſtrength.
Thus ſtretch'd out huge in length beneath the roots
Of Ætna, near Trinacria's narrow ſea,
Aſtonied, blaſted, ſpiritleſs he lies;
On whoſe high ſummit Vulcan holds his ſeat,
And forms the glowing maſs. In times to come
Hence ſtreams of torrent fire with hideous roar
Shall burſt, and with its waſteful mouths devour
All the fair fields of fruitful Sicily.
Such rage ſhall Typhon, blaſted as he is
With Jove's fierce lightning, pour inceſſant forth
In ſmoaking whirlwinds and tempeſtuous flame.

PROMETHEUS.

Thou art not unexperienc'd, nor haſt need
Of my inſtruction; ſave thyſelf, how beſt
Thy wiſdom ſhall direct thee. I will bear
My preſent fate, till Jove's harſh wrath relents.

OCEANUS.

Know'ſt thou not this, Prometheus, that ſoft ſpeech
Is to diſtemper'd wrath medicinal?

PROMETHEUS.

When ſeaſonably the healing balm's applied;
Elſe it exaſperates the ſwelling heart.

OCEANUS.

But in the fair endeavour, in th' attempt,
What diſadvantage, tell me, doſt thou ſee?

PROMETHEUS.

Unfruitfull labour, and light-thoughted folly.

OCEANUS.

Be that my weakneſs then. Oft' when the wiſe
Appears not wiſe, he works the greateſt good.

PROMETHEUS.

This will be deem'd my ſimple policy.

OCEANUS.

Theſe words indeed remand me to my grotto.

PROMETHEUS.

Ceaſe to bewail me, leſt thou wake his wrath.

OCEANUS.

What, the new monarch's of heav'n's potent throne?

PROMETHEUS.

PROMETHEUS.

Take care his indignation be not rous'd.

OCEANUS.

Thy miſery ſhall be my monitor.

PROMETHEUS.

Go then, be cautious, hold thy preſent judgement.

OCEANUS.

Thy words add ſpeed to my diſpatch. Already
My plumed ſteed his levell'd wings diſplays
To fan the liquid air, thro' fond deſire
In his own lodge his wearied ſpeed to reſt.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

For thee I heave the heart-felt ſigh,
My boſom melting at thy woes;
For thee my tear-diſtilling eye
In ſtreams of tender ſorrow flows:
For Jove's imperious ruthleſs ſoul,
That ſcorns the pow'r of mild controul,
Chaſtens with horrid tort'ring pain
Not known to gods, before his iron reign.

E'en yet this ample region o'er
Hoarſe ſtrains of ſullen woe reſound,
Thy ſtate, thy brother's ſtate deplore,
Age-honour'd glories ruin'd round.
Thy woes, beneath the ſacred ſhade
Of Aſia's paſtur'd foreſts laid,
The chaſte inhabitant bewails
Thy groans re-echoing thro' his plaintive vales.

The Colchian virgin, whoſe bold hand
Undaunted graſps the warlike ſpear;
On earth's laſt verge the Scythian band,
The torpid lake Mæotis near;
Arabia's martial race, that wield
The ſharp lance in th' embattled field,
Thro' all their rock-built cities moan,
The crags of Caucaſus return the groan.

One other, e'er thy galling chain
Of heav'n's high ſons with tortures quell'd,
That rack each joint, each ſinew ſtrain,
Titanian Atlas I beheld;

His

His giant ſtrength condemn'd to bear
The ſolid, vaſt, and pond'rous ſphere.
The ſprings whoſe freſh ſtreams ſwell around,
The hoarſe waves from their depths profound,
And all the gloomy depths below,
Sigh to his ſighs, and murmur to his woe.

PROMETHEUS.

It is not pride; deem nobler of me, virgins;
It is not pride, that held me ſilent thus;
The thought of theſe harſh chains, that hang me here,
Cuts to my heart. Yet who, like me, advanc'd
To their high dignity our new-rais'd gods?
But let me ſpare the tale, to you well known.
The ills of man you've heard: I form'd his mind,
And thro' the cloud of barb'rous ignorance
Diffus'd the beams of knowledge. I will ſpeak,
Not taxing them with blame, but my own gifts
Diſplaying, and benevolence to them.
They ſaw indeed, they heard; but what avail'd
Or ſight, or ſenſe of hearing, all things rolling
Like the unreal imagery of dreams,
In wild confuſion mix'd? The lightſome wall

Of

Of finer maſonry, the raſter'd roof
They knew not; but, like ants ſtill buried, delv'd
Deep in the earth, and ſcoop'd their ſunleſs caves.
Unmark'd the ſeaſons chang'd, the biting winter,
The flow'r perfumed ſpring, the ripening ſummer
Fertile of fruits. At random all their works,
Till I inſtructed them to mark the ſtars,
Their riſing, and, an harder ſcience yet,
Their ſetting. The rich train of marſhall'd numbers
I taught them, and the meet array of letters.
T' impreſs theſe precepts on their hearts I ſent
Memory, the active mother of all wiſdom.
I taught the patient ſteer to bear the yoke,
In all his toils joint-labourer with man.
By me the harneſs'd ſteed was train'd to whirl
The rapid car, and grace the pride of wealth.
The tall bark, lightly bounding o'er the waves,
I taught its courſe, and wing'd its flying ſail.
To man I gave theſe arts; with all my wiſdom
Yet want I now one art, that uſefull art
To free myſelf from theſe afflicting chains.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Unſeemly are thy ſufferings, ſprung from error
And impotence of mind. And now inclos'd
With all theſe ills, as ſome unſkillful leach
That ſinks beneath his malady, thy ſoul
Deſponds, nor ſeeks medicinal relief.

PROMETHEUS.

Hear my whole ſtory, thou wilt wonder more,
What uſefull arts, what ſcience I invented.
This firſt and greateſt: when the fell diſeaſe
Prey'd on the human frame, relief was none,
Nor healing drug, nor cool refreſhing draught,
Nor pain-aſſuaging unguent; but they pin'd
Without redreſs, and waſted, till I taught them
To mix the balmy medicine, of pow'r
To chaſe each pale diſeaſe, and ſoften pain.
I taught the various modes of propheecy,
What truth the dream portends, the omen what
Of nice diſtinction, what the caſual ſight
That meets us on the way; the flight of birds,
When to the right, when to the left they take
Their airy courſe, their various ways of life,

Their

Their feuds, their fondneſſes, their ſocial flocks.
I taught th' Haruſpex to inſpect the entrails,
Their ſmoothneſs, and their colour to the gods
Gratefull, the gall, the liver ſtreak'd with veins,
The limbs involv'd in fat, and the long chine
Plac'd on the blazing altar; from the ſmoak
And mounting flame to mark th' unerring omen.
Theſe arts I taught. And all the ſecret treaſures
Deep buried in the bowels of the earth,
Braſs, iron, ſilver, gold, their uſe to man,
Let the vain tongue make what high vaunts it may,
Are my inventions all; and, in a word,
Prometheus taught each uſefull art to man.

CHORUS.

Let not thy love to man o'erleap the bounds
Of reaſon, nor neglect thy wretched ſtate:
So my fond hope ſuggeſts thou ſhalt be free
From theſe baſe chains, nor leſs in pow'r than Jove.

PROMETHEUS.

Not thus, it is not in the Fates that thus
Theſe things ſhould end: cruſh'd with a thouſand wrongs,
A thouſand woes, I ſhall eſcape theſe chains.

Neceſſity

Neceſſity is ſtronger far than art.

CHORUS.

Who then is ruler of neceſſity?

PROMETHEUS.

The triple Fates and unforgetting furies.

CHORUS.

Muſt Jove then yield to their ſuperior pow'r?

PROMETHEUS.

He no way ſhall eſcape his deſtin'd fate.

CHORUS.

What, but eternal empire, is his fate?

PROMETHEUS.

Thou may'ſt not know this now: forbear t' inquire.

CHORUS.

Is it of moment what thou keep'ſt thus cloſe?

PROMETHEUS.

No more of this diſcourſe; it is not time
Now to diſcloſe that which requires the ſeal
Of ſtricteſt ſecreſy; by guarding which
I ſhall eſcape the miſery of theſe chains.

CHORUS.

STROPHE.

Never, never may my ſoul
Jove's all-ruling pow'r defy;
Never feel his harſh controul,
Sov'reign ruler of the ſky.
When the hallow'd ſteer has bled,
When the ſacred feaſt is ſpread,
'Midſt the cryſtal waves below,
Whence father Ocean's boundleſs billows flow,
Let not my foot be ſlow:
There, th' ætherial gueſts among,
No rude ſpeech diſgrace my tongue.
May my mind this reverence keep;
Print it ſtrong, and grave it deep.

ANTISTROPHE.

When thro' life's extended ſcene
Hope her ſtedfaſt luſtre throws,
Swells the ſoul with joy ſerene,
With ſublimeſt triumph glows.
Seeſt thou this pure luſtre ſhine?
Are theſe heartfelt raptures thine?

My

My cold blood curdles in my veins,
To ſee thy hideous woes, thy tort'ring pains,
And adamantine chains.
Thy free ſoul, untaught to fear,
Scorn'd the danger threat'ning near;
And for mortals dar'd defy
The ſovereign monarch of the ſky.

EPODE.

Vain thy ardor, vain thy grace,
They nor force nor aid repay;
Like a dream man's feeble race,
Short-liv'd reptiles of a day.
Shall their weak devices move
The' order'd harmony of Jove?
Touch'd with pity of thy pain,
All ſad and ſlow I pour the moral ſtrain;
Chang'd from that melting vein,
When the light mellifluous meaſure
Round thy bath, and round thy bed,
For our ſea-nymph ſiſter ſpread,
Awoke young love and bridal pleaſure,
And pour'd the ſoul of harmony,
To greet the bright Heſione.

IO, PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

IO.

Whither, ah whither am I borne!
To what rude ſhore, what barb'rous race? O thou,
Whoe'er thou art, that chain'd to that bleak rock,
The ſeat of deſolation, rueſt thy crimes,
Say on what ſhore my wretched footſteps ſtray.—
Again that ſting!—Ah me, that form again!—
With all his hundred eyes the earth-born Argus—
Cover it, Earth! See, how it glares upon me,
The horrid ſpectre!—Wilt thou not, O Earth,
Cover the dead, that from thy dark abyſs
He comes to haunt me, to purſue my ſteps,
And drive me foodleſs o'er the barren ſtrand?
Hoarſe ſounds the reed-compacted pipe, a note
Sullen and drowſy.—Miſerable me!
Whither will theſe wide-wand'ring errors lead me?
How, ſon of Saturn, how have I offended,
That with theſe ſtings, theſe tortures thou purſueſt me,
And driveſt to madneſs my affrighted ſoul!
Hear me, ſupreme of gods, O hear thy ſuppliant,
Blaſt me with lightnings, bury me in the' earth,

Or

Or caſt me to the monſters of the ſea;
But ſpare theſe toils, ſpare theſe wide-wand'ring errors,
Which drive me round the world, and know no reſt.

CHORUS.

Hear'ſt thou the voice of this lamenting virgin?
For ſuch ſhe is, tho' in that form diſguis'd.

PROMETHEUS.

I hear her griefs, that whirl her ſoul to madneſs,
Daughter of Inachus, whoſe love enflames
The heart of Jove; hence Juno's jealous rage
Drives the poor wanderer reſtleſs o'er the world.

IO.

Whence is it that I hear my father's name?
Speak to my miſery, tell me who thou art;
What wretch art thou, that to a wretch like me
Uttereſt theſe truths, naming the malady,
Which, heav'n-inflicted, ſtings my tortur'd ſoul
To frenzy? Hence with hurrying ſteps I rove
Foodleſs, purſued by never-ceaſing wrath.
Ah me! What child of miſery ever ſuffer'd
Miſery like mine? But tell me, clearly tell me
What woes await me yet, what eaſe, what cure?

Say,

Say, if thou know'ſt, ſpeak, tell a wand'ring virgin.

PROMETHEUS.

All, thou can'ſt wiſh to learn, I'll tell thee clearly,
Wrapt in no veil abſtruſe; but in clear terms,
As friend to friend. Thine eyes behold Prometheus,
Whoſe warm benevolence gave fire to men.

IO

O thou, the common bleſſing of mankind,
Wretched Prometheus, wherefore are theſe ſufferings?

PROMETHEUS.

Scarce have I ceas'd lamenting my misfortunes.

IO.

And wilt thou not allow me that ſad office?

PROMETHEUS.

Aſk what thou wilt, thou ſhalt learn all from me.

IO.

Say then, who bound thee in that rifted rock?

PROMETHEUS.

The ruthleſs will of Jove, but Vulcan's hand.

IO.

In what offending art thou chaſten'd thus?

PROMETHEUS.

PROMETHEUS.

Suffice it thee ſo much has been declar'd.

IO.

Say then what time ſhall end my wretched wand'rings.

PROMETHEUS.

Better repoſe in ignorance, than know.

IO.

Whate'er my woes to come, hide them not from me.

PROMETHEUS.

That favour unreluctant cou'd I grant thee.

IO.

Why this delay then to declare the whole?

PROMETHEUS.

Ungratefull taſk to rend thy ſoul with anguiſh,

IO.

Regard not me more than is pleaſing to me.

PROMETHEUS.

Conjur'd thus ſtrongly I muſt ſpeak. Hear then.

CHORUS.

Not yet: this mournfull pleaſure let me ſhare:
Let us firſt learn the ſtory of her woes;
Her lips will teach us each ſad circumſtance

Of

Of miſery paſt; the future be thy taſk.

PROMETHEUS.

Vouchſafe t' indulge their wiſh; they merit it;
And are beſides the ſiſters of thy father.
Nor light the recompenſe, when they, who hear,
Melt at the melancholy tale, and drop,
In pity drop, the ſympathizing tear.

IO.

Ill wou'd excuſe become me, or denial;
Take then the plain unornamented tale
Ye wiſh to hear; tho' ſad the taſk injoin'd,
And hard: for how relate the heav'n-ſent tempeſt
That burſt upon my head, my form thus chang'd,
And all the weight of woe that overwhelms me?
Still, when retir'd to reſt, air-bodied forms
Viſit my ſlumbers nightly, ſoothing me
With gentle ſpeech, Bleſt maid, why hoard for ever
Thy virgin treaſure, when the higheſt nuptials
Await thy choice; the flames of ſoft deſire
Have touch'd the heart of Jove; he burns with love:
Diſdain not, gentle virgin, ah diſdain not
The couch of Jove; to Lerna's deep receſs,

Where

Where graze thy father's herds the meads along,
Go, gentle virgin, crown the god's deſires.
The night returns, the viſionary forms
Return again, and haunt my troubled ſoul
Forbidding reſt, till to my father's ear
I dar'd diſcloſe the viſions of the night.
To Pytho, to Dodona's vocal grove
He ſent his ſeers, anxious to know what beſt
Was pleaſing to the gods. Return'd they bring
Dark-utter'd anſwers of ambiguous ſenſe.
At length one oracle diſtinct and plain
Pronounc'd its mandates, charging Inachus
To drive me from his houſe and from my country,
To rove at large o'er earth's extremeſt bounds:
Shou'd he refuſe, the vengefull bolt of Jove,
Wing'd with red flames wou'd all his race deſtroy.
Obedient to the Pythian god he drove me
Unwilling from his houſe, himſelf unwilling,
Compell'd by Jove, and harſh neceſſity.
Strait was my ſenſe diſorder'd, my fair form
Chang'd, as you ſee, diſfigur'd with theſe horns;
And tortur'd with the bryze's horrid ſting,

Wild with my pain with frentic ſpeed I hurried
To Cenchrea's vale with ſilver-winding ſtreams
Irriguous, and the fount whence Lerna ſpreads
Its wide expanſe of waters; cloſe behind
In wrathfull mood walk'd Argus, earth-born herdſman,
With all his eyes obſervant of my ſteps.
Him unawares a ſudden fate depriv'd
Of life; whilſt I, ſtung with that heav'n-ſent peſt,
Am driv'n with devious ſpeed from land to land.
Thou haſt my tale. If ought of woes to come
Thy præſcient mind divines, relate them freely;
Nor thro' falſe pity with fallacious words
Sooth my vain hopes; my ſoul abhors as baſe
The fabling tongue of glozing courteſy.

CHORUS.

No more, no more, forbear. Ah never, never
Conceiv'd I that a tale ſo ſtrange ſhou'd reach
My ears; that miſeries, woes, diſtreſſes, terrors,
Dreadfull to ſight, intolerable to ſenſe,
Shou'd ſhock me thus: woe, woe, unhappy fate!
How my ſoul ſhudders at the fate of Io!

PROMETHEUS.

Already doſt thou ſigh, already tremble?
Check theſe emotions till the whole is heard.

CHORUS.

Speak, ſhow us: to the ſick ſome gleam of comfort
Flows from the knowledge of their pains to come.

PROMETHEUS.

Your firſt requeſt with eaſe has been obtain'd;
For from her lips you wiſh'd to hear the tale
Of her afflictions. Hear the reſt; what woes
From Juno's rage await this ſuff'ring virgin.
And thou with deep attention mark my words,
Daughter of Inachus; and learn from them
The traces of thy way. Firſt then, from hence
Turn to the orient ſun, and paſs the height
Of theſe uncultur'd mountains; thence deſcend
To where the wandering Scythians, train'd to bear
The diſtant-wounding bow, on wheels aloft
Roll on their wattled cottages; to theſe
Approach not nigh, but turn thy devious ſteps
Along the rough verge of the murm'ring main,
And paſs the barb'rous country: on the left

The Chalybes inhabit, whoſe rude hands
Temper the glowing ſteel; beware of theſe,
A ſavage and inhoſpitable race.
Thence ſhalt thou reach the banks of that proud ſtream,
Which from its *roaring torrent takes its name;
But paſs it not, tempt not its dangerous depths
Unfordable, till now thy weary ſteps
Shall reach the diſtant bound of Caucaſus,
Monarch of mountains; from whoſe extreme height
The burſting flood rolls down his pow'r of waters.
Paſſing thoſe ſtar-aſpiring heights, deſcend
Where to the ſouth the Amazonian tents,
Hoſtile to men, ſtretch o'er the plain; whoſe troops
In after times ſhall near Thermodon's banks
Fix in Themiſcyra's tow'rs their martial rule,
Where Salmydeſia points her cruel rocks,
And glories in her wrecks: this female train
With courteous zeal ſhall guide thee in thy way.
Arriving where the dark Cimmerian lake
Spreads from its narrow mouth its vaſt expanſe,
Leave it, and boldly plunge thy vent'rous foot

* Araxis.

In

In the Mæotic ſtraits; the voice of fame
Shall eternize thy paſſage, and from thee
Call it the Boſphorus: there ſhalt thou quit
The ſhores of Europe, and intrepid reach
The continent of Aſia.——Seems he now,
This tyrant of the ſkies, ſeems he in all
Of fierce and headlong violence, when his love
Plunges a mortal in ſuch deep diſtreſſes?
A rugged woer, virgin, have thy charms
Won thee; for be aſſur'd what I have told thee
Is but a prelude to the woes untold.

IO.

Ah miſerable me!

PROMETHEUS.

Again that exclamation, that deep groan!
What wilt thou do, when thou ſhalt learn the reſt?

CHORUS.

Remains there ought of ills yet to be told?

PROMETHEUS.

A wide tempeſtuous ſea of balefull woes.

IO.

What then has life deſirable? Why rather

From

From this rude cliff leap I not headlong down,
And end my woes? Better to die at once,
Than linger out a length of life in pain.

PROMETHEUS.

Ill wou'dſt thou bear my miſeries, by the Fates
Exempt from death, the refuge of th' afflicted.
But my afflictions know no bounds, till Jove
Falls from th' imperial ſovereignty of heav'n.

IO.

Shall he then fall? Shall the time come, when Jove
Shall ſink dethron'd? I think I ſhou'd rejoice
To ſee the tyrant's ruin: Shou'd I not,
Since from his hands I ſuffer all theſe ills.

PROMETHEUS.

Then be thou well aſſur'd it ſhall be ſo.

IO.

And who ſhall wreſt th' imperial ſceptre from him?

PROMETHEUS.

Himſelf, deſtroy'd by his improvident counſils.

IO.

Oh ſay, if harmleſs what I aſk, ſay how.

PROMETHEUS.

PROMETHEUS.

Urging a marriage he ſhall dearly rue.

IO.

Heav'n-ſprung, or mortal? If permitted, ſay.

PROMETHEUS.

What matters which? It may not be diſclos'd.

IO

Shall then a wife deprive him of the throne?

PROMETHEUS.

She greater than the ſire ſhall bear a ſon.

IO.

Has he no means of pow'r t' avert this fate?

PROMETHEUS.

None, till from theſe vile chains I ſhall be free.

IO.

And who, 'gainſt Jove's high will, ſhall ſet thee free?

PROMETHEUS.

One, of neceſſity, from thee deſcended.

IO.

From me! My ſon releaſe thee from thy pains?

PROMETHEUS.

Third of thy race, firſt numb'ring ten deſcents.

IO.

IO.

Oracular this, of difficult conjecture.

PROMETHEUS.

Check then thy wiſh, nor ſeek to know thy toils.

IO.

Do not hold forth a grace, then ſnatch it from me.

PROMETHEUS.

Of two relations I will grant thee either.

IO.

Propoſe the two, then leave the choice to me.

PROMETHEUS.

Shall I declare the reſt of thy misfortunes,
Or doſt thou wiſh to know him that ſhall free me?

CHORUS.

The firſt to her, to me this other grace
Vouchſafe, nor my requeſt treat with diſdain.
To her impart what toils remain; to me
Him that ſhall free thee; this I moſt deſire.

PROMETHEUS.

This your requeſt I ſhall not be averſe
To gratify, and tell you all you wiſh.
Firſt for thy various wand'rings: Mark my words,

And

And grave them on the tablet of thy heart.
When thou ſhalt paſs the flood, the common bound
Of either continent, direct thy ſteps
Right to the firey portals of the eaſt,
The ſun's bright walk, along the roaring beach,
Till thou ſhalt come to the gorgonian plains
Of Ciſthine, where dwell the ſwan-like forms
Of Phorcys' daughters, bent and white with age;
One common eye have theſe, one common tooth,
And never does the ſun with chearfull ray
Viſit them darkling, nor the moon's pale orb
That ſilvers o'er the night. The Gorgons nigh,
Their ſiſters theſe, ſpread their broad wings, and wreath
Their horrid hair with ſerpents, fiends abhor'd,
Whom never mortal cou'd behold, and live.
Be therefore warn'd, and let it profit thee
To learn what elſe deteſtable to ſight
Lies in thy way, and dang'rous. Shun the Gryphins,
Thoſe dumb and rav'nous dogs of Jove. Avoid
The Arimaſpian troops, whoſe frowning foreheads
Glare with one blazing eye; along the banks,
Where Pluto rolls his ſtreams of gold, they rein

Their foaming ſteeds; approach them not, but ſeek
A land far diſtant, where the tawny race
Dwell near the fountains of the ſun, and where
The Nigris pours his duſky waters; wind
Along his banks, till thou ſhalt reach the fall
Where from the mountains with Papyrus crown'd
The venerable Nile impetuous pours
His headlong torrent; he ſhall guide thy ſteps
To thoſe irriguous plains, whoſe triple ſides
His arms ſurround; there have the Fates decreed
Thee and thy ſons to form the lengthen'd line.—
Is ought imperfect, ought obſcure? Reſume
Th' inquiry, and be taught with greater clearneſs:
I have more leiſure than I wiſh to have.

CHORUS.

If thou haſt ought remaining, ought omitted
To tell her of her woefull wand'rings, ſpeak it:
If all has been declar'd, to us vouchſafe
The grace we aſk; what, thou remembreſt well.

PROMETHEUS.

Her wand'rings in full meaſure has ſhe heard.
That ſhe may know ſhe has not heard in vain,

Her

Her labours paſs'd, e'er theſe rude rocks ſhe reach'd,
Will I recite, good argument that truth
Stamps my predictions ſure: nor ſhall I uſe
A length of words, but ſpeak thy wand'rings briefly.
Soon as thy foot reach'd the Moloſſian ground,
And round Dodona's ridgy heights, where ſtands
The ſeat oracular of Theſprotian Jove,
And, wond'rous prodigy, the vocal groves,
Theſe in clear, plain, unqueſtionable terms
Hail'd thee "Illuſtrious wife of Jove that ſhall be,"
If that may ſooth thy ſoul. The tort'ring ſting
Thence drove thee wand'ring o'er the wave-waſh'd ſtrand
To the great gulf of Rhea, thence thy courſe
Thro' the vex'd billows hither. But know this,
In after times ſhall that deep gulph from thee
Be call'd th' Ionian, and preſerve to men
The memory of thy paſſage. This to thee,
Proving the præſcience of my mind, that ſees
More than appears: The reſt to you and her,
Reſuming my diſcourſe, I ſpeak in common.
On the land's extreme verge a city ſtands,
Canobus, proudly' elevate, nigh where the Nile

Rolls to the ſea his rich ſtream: there ſhall Jove
Heal thy diſtraction, and with gentle hand
Sooth thee to peace. Of his high race a ſon,
The duſky Epaphus, ſhall riſe, and rule
The wide extended land o'er which the Nile
Pours his broad waves. In the fifth line from him
Fifty fair ſiſters ſhall return to Argos
Unwillingly, to fly the kindred beds
Of fifty brothers; theſe with eager ſpeed
Swift as the faulcon's flight when he purſues
The dove at hand, ſhall follow, nor obtain
The nuptials, which th' indignant gods deny.
Theſe ſhall Pelaſgia ſee by female hands
Welt'ring in gore, the night's convenient gloom
Fav'ring the daring deed; each female draws
The trenchant ſword, and in her huſband's blood
Stains the broad blade. Thus fatal to my foes
Be love! Yet one ſhall feel its ſofter flame
Melting her ſoul, and from the general carnage
Preſerve her huſband, chuſing to be deem'd
Of baſe degenerate ſpirit, rather than ſtain
Her gentle hands with blood. From her ſhall Argos

Receive

Receive a long imperial line of kings.
The full diſtinct relation wou'd be tedious.
From her ſhall riſe the hero, ſtrong to wing
The dreaded ſhaft; he from theſe tort'ring pains
Shall ſet me free: this my age-honour'd mother,
Titanian Themis, with oracular voice
Foretold: but when, or how, requires a length
Of narrative, which known wou'd nought avail thee.

IO.

Ah me! Ah wretched me! That pang again!
Again that firey pang, whoſe mad'ning ſmart
Corrodes and rankles in my breaſt! With fear
My heart pants thick; wildly my eyeballs roll;
Diſtraction drives my hurried ſteps a length
Of weary wand'ring; my ungovern'd tongue
Utters tumultuous ravings, that roll high
The floods of paſſion ſwoln with horrid woes.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STROPHE.

Was it not wiſdom's ſovereign pow'r
That beam'd her brighteſt, pureſt flame,

T' illume

T 'illume her ſage's ſoul the thought to frame,
And cloath with words his heav'n-taught lore?
" Whoe'er thou art, whom young deſire
Shall lead to Hymen's holy fire,
Chuſe, from thy equals chuſe thy humble love:
Let not the pomp of wealth allure thine eye,
Nor high-trac'd lineage thy ambition move;
Ill ſuits with low degree t' aſpire ſo high."

ANTISTROPHE.

Never, O never may my fate
See me a ſplendid victim led
To grace the mighty Jove's imperial bed,
Or ſhare a god's magnific ſtate.
When Io's miſeries meet my eyes,
What horrors in my ſoul ariſe!
Her virgin boſom, harb'ring high intent,
In man delights not, and his love diſdains;
Hence the dire peſt by wrathfull Juno ſent,
Her wide wild wand'rings hence, and agonizing pains.

EPODE.

Me leſs ambitious thoughts engage,
And love within my humbler ſphere:

Hence

Hence my ſoul reſts in peace ſecure from fear,
Secure from danger's threat'ning rage.
Me may the pow'rs that rule the ſky
Ne'er view with love's reſiſtleſs eye:
Ah, never be th' unequal conflict mine,
To ſtrive with their inextricable love:
Might not my heart againſt itſelf combine?
Or how eſcape the pow'rfull arts of Jove?

PROMETHEUS.

Yet ſhall this Jove, with all his ſelf-will'd pride,
Learn humbler thoughts, taught by that fatal marriage,
Which from the lofty throne of ſovereign rule
Shall ſink him to a low and abject ſtate,
And on his head fullfill his father's curſe,
The curſe of Saturn, vented in that hour
When from his antient royalty he fell.
Of all the gods not one, myſelf except,
Can warn him of his fate, and how to ſhun
Th' impending ruin. I know all, and how.
Let him then ſit, and glorying in his height
Roll with his red right hand his vollied thunder
Falſely ſecure, and wreath his bick'ring flames.

Yet

Yet nought ſhall they avail him, nor prevent
His abject and diſhonorable fall.
Such rival adverſary forms he now
Againſt himſelf, prodigious in his might,
And unaſſailable; whoſe rage ſhall roll
Flames that ſurpaſs his lightnings, fiercer bolts
That quaſh his thunders; and from Neptune's hand
Daſh his trined mace, that from the bottom ſtirs
The troubled ſea, and ſhakes the ſolid earth.
Cruſh'd with this dreadfull ruin ſhall he learn
How different, to command, and to obey.

CHORUS.

Thy ominous tongue gives utterance to thy wiſh.

PROMETHEUS.

It is my wiſh, and ſhall be ratified.

CHORUS.]

What, ſhall high Jove bend to a greater lord?

PROMETHEUS.

And to a yoke more galling ſtoop his neck.

CHORUS.

Doſt thou not fear, vaunting this bold diſcourſe?

PROMETHEUS.

PROMETHEUS.

What ſhou'd I fear, by Fate exempt from death?

CHORUS.

But he may add freſh tortures to thy pain.

PROMETHEUS.

Let him then add them, I await them all.

CHORUS.

Wiſe they, who reverence the ſtern pow'r of vengeance.

PROMETHEUS.

Go then, with prompt ſervility fall down
Before your lord, fawn, cringe, and ſue for grace.
For me, I value him at leſs than nothing.
Let him exert his brief authority,
And lord it whilſt he may; his pow'r in Heav'n
Shall vaniſh ſoon, nor leave a trace behind.—
But ſee, his meſſenger haſtes on amain,
Th' obſequious lacquey of this new-made monarch:
He comes, I ween, the bearer of freſh tidings.

MERCURY, PROMETHEUS, CHORUS.

MERCURY.

To thee grown old in craft, deep drench'd in gall,
Diſguſtfull to the gods, too prodigal

Of interdicted gifts to mortal man,
Thief of the fire of Heav'n, to thee my meſſage.
My father bids thee ſay what nuptials theſe
Thy tongue thus vaunts as threat'ning his high pow'r;
And clearly ſay, couch'd in no riddling phraſe,
Each ſeveral circumſtance; propound not to me
Ambiguous terms, Prometheus; for thou ſeeſt
Jove brooks not ſuch, unfit to win his favour.

PROMETHEUS.

Thou doeſt thy meſſage proudly, in high terms,
Becoming well the ſervant of ſuch lords.
Your youthfull pow'r is now; yet vainly deem ye
Your high-rais'd tow'rs impregnable to pain:
Have I not ſeen two ſovereigns of the ſky
Sink from their glorious ſtate? And I ſhall ſee
A third, this preſent lord, with ſudden ruin
Diſhonorably fall. What, ſeem I now
To dread, to tremble at theſe new-rais'd gods?
That never ſhall their force extort from me.
Hence then, the way thou cameſt return with ſpeed:
Thy vain inquiries get no other anſwer.

MERCURY.

MERCURY.

Such inſolence before, ſo firey fierce,
Drew on thy head this dreadfull puniſhment.

PROMETHEUS.

My miſeries, be aſſur'd, I would not change
For thy gay ſervitude, but rather chuſe
To live a vaſſal to this dreary rock,
Than lacquey the proud heels of Jove. Theſe words,
If inſolent, your inſolence extorts.

MERCURY.

I think thou art delighted with thy woes.

PROMETHEUS.

Delighted! Might I ſee mine enemies
Delighted thus! And thee I hold among them.

MERCURY.

And why blame me for thy calamities?

PROMETHEUS.

To tell thee in a word, I hate them all,
Theſe gods; of them I deſerv'd well, and they
Ungratefull and unjuſt work me theſe ills.

MERCURY.

Thy malady, I find, is no ſmall madneſs.

PROMETHEUS.

If to deteſt my enemies be madneſs,
It is a malady I wiſh to have.

MERCURY.

Were it well with thee, who cou'd brook thy pride?

PROMETHEUS.

Ah me!

MERCURY.

That ſound of grief Jove doth not know.

PROMETHEUS.

Time, as its age advanceth, teaches all things.

MERCURY.

All its advances have not taught thee wiſdom.

PROMETHEUS.

I ſhou'd not elſe waſte words on thee, a vaſſal.

MERCURY.

Nought will thou anſwer then to what Jove aſks.

PROMETHEUS.

If due, I wou'd repay his courteſy.

MERCURY.

Why am I check'd, why rated as a boy?

PROMETHEUS.

A boy thou art, more ſimple than a boy,
If thou haſt hopes to be inform'd by me.
Not all his tortures, all his arts ſhall move me
T' unlock my lips, till this curs'd chain be loos'd.
No, let him hurl his flaming lightnings, wing
His whitening ſnows, and with his thunders ſhake
The rocking earth, they move not me to ſay
What force ſhall wreſt the ſceptre from his hand.

MERCURY.

Weigh theſe things well, will theſe unlooſe thy chains?

PROMETHEUS.

Well have they long been weigh'd, and well conſider'd.

MERCURY.

Subdue, vain fool, ſubdue thy inſolence,
And let thy miſeries teach thee juſter thoughts.

PROMETHEUS.

Thy counſils, like the waves that daſh againſt
The rock's firm baſe, diſquiet but not move me.
Conceive not of me that, thro' fear what Jove
May in his rage inflict, my fix'd diſdain
Shall e'er relent, e'er ſuffer my firm mind

To

To ſink to womaniſh ſoftneſs, to fall proſtrate,
To ſtretch my ſupplicating hands, intreating
My hated foe to free me from theſe chains.
Far be that ſhame, that abject weakneſs from me.

MERCURY.

I ſee thou art implacable, unſoften'd
By all the mild intreaties I can urge;
But like a young ſteed rein'd, that proudly ſtruggles,
And champs his iron curb, thy haughty ſoul
Abates not of its unavailing fierceneſs.
But pride, diſdaining to be rul'd by reaſon,
Sinks weak and valueleſs. But mark me well,
If not obedient to my words, a ſtorm,
A firey and inevitable deluge
Shall burſt in threefold vengeance on thy head.
Firſt, his fierce thunder wing'd with lightning flames
Shall rend this rugged rock, and cover thee
With hideous ruin: long time ſhalt thou lie
Aſtonied in its rifted ſides, till drag'd
Again to light; then ſhall the bird of Jove,
The rav'ning eagle, lur'd with ſcent of blood,
Mangle thy body, and each day returning,

An uninvited gueſt, plunge his fell beak,
And feaſt and riot on thy black'ning liver.
Expect no pauſe, no reſpite, till ſome god
Comes to relieve thy pains, willing to paſs
The dreary realms of ever-during night,
The dark deſcent of Tartarus profound.
Weigh theſe things well; this is no fiction dreſt
In vaunting terms, but words of ſerious truth.
The mouth of Jove knows not to utter falſehood,
But what he ſpeaks is fate. Be cautious then,
Regard thyſelf; let not o'erweening pride
Deſpiſe the friendly voice of prudent counſil.

CHORUS.

Nothing amiſs we deem his words, but fraught
With reaſon, who but wills thee to relax
Thy haughty ſpirit, and by prudent counſils
Purſue thy peace: be then adviſ'd; what ſhame
For one ſo wiſe to perſevere in error?

PROMETHEUS.

All this I knew e'er he declar'd his meſſage.
That enemy from enemy ſhou'd ſuffer
Extreme indignity is nothing ſtrange.
Let him then work his horrible pleaſure on me;

Wreath his black curling flames, tempeſt the air
With vollied thunders and wild warring winds,
Rend from its roots the firm earth's ſolid baſe,
Heave from the roaring main its boiſterous waves,
And daſh them to the ſtars; me let him hurl,
Caught in the firey tempeſt, to the gloom
Of deepeſt Tartarus; not all his pow'r
Can quench th' ætherial breath of life in me.

MERCURY.

Such ravings, ſuch wild counſils might you hear,
From moon-ſtruck madneſs. What is this but madneſs?
Were he at eaſe, wou'd he abate his frenzy?
But you, whoſe gentle hearts with ſocial ſorrow
Melt at his ſuff'rings, from this place remove,
Remove with ſpeed, leſt the tempeſtuous roar
Of his fierce thunder ſtrike your ſouls with horror.

CHORUS.

To other themes, to other counſils turn
Thy voice, where pleaded reaſon may prevail:
This is ill urg'd, and may not be admitted.
Wou'dſt thou ſollicit me to deeds of baſeneſs?
Whate'er betides, with him will I endure it.

The

The vile betrayer I have learn'd to hate;
There is no fouler ſtain, my ſoul abhors it.

MERCURY.

Remember you are warn'd; if ill o'ertake you
Accuſe not Fortune, lay not the blame on Jove,
As by his hand ſunk in calamities
Unthought of, unforeſeen: no, let the blame
Light on yourſelves; your folly not unwarn'd,
Not unawares, but 'gainſt your better knowledge,
Involv'd you in th' inextricable toils.

PROMETHEUS.

He fables not; I feel in very deed
The firm earth rock; the thunder's deep'ning roar
Rolls with redoubled rage; the bick'ring flames
Flaſh thick; the eddying ſands are whirl'd on high;
In dreadfull oppoſition the wild winds
Rend the vex'd air; the boiſt'rous billows riſe
Confounding ſea and ſky; th' impetuous ſtorm
Rolls all its terrible fury on my head.
Seeſt thou this, awefull Themis; and thou, Æther,
Thro' whoſe pure azure floats the general ſtream
Of liquid light, ſee you what wrongs I ſuffer!

# THE

# SUPPLICANTS.

# The SUPPLICANTS.

THE fire and fury, that rages thro' the former Play, is agreeably contraſted, where perhaps the reader leaſt expected it, with the ſober ſpirit of the daughter of Danaus. Theſe illuſtrious Supplicants are drawn indeed with a firmneſs of ſoul becoming their high rank, but tempered with a modeſt and amiable ſenſibility, and an intereſting plaintiveneſs, that might have been a model even to the gentle and paſſionate Ovid; and that heart muſt have little of the fine feelings of humanity, that does not ſympathize with their diſtreſs. The provident wiſdom of their father Danaus, the calm but firm dignity of Pelaſgus, the inviolable attachment to the laws of hoſpitality, the ſolemn ſenſe of religion, and the chaſtneſs of ſentiment thro' the whole, muſt pleaſe every mind that is capable of being touched with the gracious ſimpliciiy of antient manners.

The ſcene is near the ſhore, in an open grove cloſe to the altar and images of the Gods preſiding over the ſacred games, with a view of the ſea and the ſhips of Ægyptus on one ſide, and of the towers of Argos on the other; with hills, and woods, and vales, a river flowing between them; all together with the perſons of the drama forming a picture, that would have well employed the united pencils of Pouſſin and Claude Lorain.

Perſons

# Perſons of the Drama.

CHORUS, the Daughters of DANAUS.

DANAUS.

PELASGUS.

HERALD.

# THE SUPPLICANTS.

## CHORUS.

PROTECTOR of the ſuppliant, gracious Jove,
Look with an eye of pity on this train,
Which from the gentle depths of Nile have ſped
Their naval enterprize. Thoſe ſacred fields,
That border on the Syrian waſtes, we leave,
Not by the public voice of juſtice doom'd
For blood, but willing fugitives from youths
Too near allied, whoſe impious love wou'd raiſe
Perforce the nuptial bed by us abhor'd;

Sons

Sons of Ægyptus they. Our father Danaus,
On whoſe authority we build our counſils,
And ſtrengthen our abhorrence, plan'd theſe meaſures,
And wrought us to this honorable toil,
To wing our ſwift flight o'er the billowy main,
And reach the ſhores of Argos, whence we draw
Our vaunted lineage, from th' embrace of Jove
Enamour'd of that virgin, whom transform'd
The tort'ring ſting drove wand'ring o'er the world.
To what more friendly region can we take
Our progreſs, bearing in our ſuppliant hands
Theſe peacefull branches crown'd with ſacred wreaths?
Ye royal tow'rs, thou earth, and ye fair ſtreams
Of orient chryſtal, ye immortal gods
In the high heav'ns enthron'd, ye awefull pow'rs
That deep beneath hold your tremendous ſeats,
Jove the preſerver, guardian of the roof
Where dwells the pious man, receive your ſuppliants,
Breathe o'er theſe realms your favorable ſpirit,
And form them to receive this female train!
But for thoſe men, that proud injurious band
Sprung from Ægyptus, e'er they fix their foot

On this moiſt ſhore, drive them into the deep,
With all their flying ſtreamers and quick oars,
There let them meet the whirlwind's boiſt'rous rage,
Thund'rings, and light'nings, and the furious blaſts
That harrow up the wild tempeſtuous waves,
And periſh in the ſtorm, e'er they aſcend
Our kindred bed, and ſeize againſt our will
What nature and the laws of blood deny.

To thee, th' avenging pow'r
Ador'd beyond the waves of this wide main,
Raiſe we the ſolemn ſtrain,
Her progeny, that crop'd each various flow'r
Which deck'd the fragrant mead,
Till Jove's ſoft touch her alter'd ſhape careſs'd,
And ſooth'd her ſoul to reſt:
Thereto we add thy fate-appointed name,
Epaphus of mighty fame,
To thee we raiſe the ſtrain, whilſt now we tread
Thy reverenc'd mother's fertile ſoil,
And record each various toil;

Now ſhall each trace to light be brought,
Tho' far ſurpaſſing human thought;
Now ſhall the wond'rous tale unfold,
Myſterious deeds of times of old.

Dwells in this land ſome augur near?
If theſe ſad wailings reach his ear,
Will he not deem the mournfull note
Warbled from Philomela's throat,
Such time as from the falcon's wing
She leaves fav'rite haunt and ſpring,
And o'er her neſt, and o'er her young
Attunes her ſweeteſt, ſaddeſt ſong,
And in the melancholy ſtrain
Laments the fate of Itys ſlain;
In ſullen rage the mother ſtands,
And in her ſon's blood bathes her hands.
In notes ſo ſweet, ſo ſad, I try
To raiſe th' Ionian harmony;
And rend theſe cheeks, that ripening drew
On Nile's warm banks their vermeil hue;

Whilſt

Whilſt at each ſolemn, penſive pauſe
My burſting heart the deep ſigh draws,
And, woe-betroth'd, fears e'en its friends,
If yet perchance one friend attends,
For that our ſails the deep explore,
Leaving our native duſky ſhore.

Ye Gods, from whom we proudly trace
The glories of our high-born race,
Hear us, ye pow'rs, propitious hear,
And ſhow that juſtice is your care;
Guard in our juſt, our holy cauſe
The ſanctity of nature's laws;
You, that abhor each impious deed,
Ariſe, protect the nuptial bed.
When Mars to ſlaughter gives the reins,
And rages o'er th' enſanguin'd plains,
To each that flies the altar gives
A refuge, and the ſuppliant lives,
For Jove, with pious pray'rs ador'd,
Commands ſtern war to drop the ſword.

Jove's firm decree, tho' wrapt in night,
Beams 'midſt the gloom a conſtant light;
Man's fate obſcure in darkneſs lies,
Not to be pierc'd by mortal eyes:
The juſt reſolves of his high mind
A glorious conſummation find;
Tho' in majeſtic ſtate enthron'd
Thick clouds and dark incloſe him round,
As from the tow'r of heav'n his eye
Surveys bold man's impiety;
Till, his ripe wrath on vengeance bent,
He arms each god for puniſhment,
And from his high and holy throne
Sends all his awefull judgements down.
And may his eye our wrongs ſurvey,
Mark'd by inſulting man his prey;
As each bold youth by paſſion fir'd
Againſt our boſom-peace conſpir'd,
And to deceit's ſmooth influence
Join'd rude and boiſt'rous violence:
An infant foreſt theſe, that ſhoot
Their wild growth from one parent root,

And o'er our freſh bloom ſtrive to ſpread
Their chearleſs and malignant ſhade.
Thus I attune my notes of woe,
And bid the varied meaſures flow;
Now the ſhrilling deſcant chaſe,
Now ſolemn ſink the deep'ning baſe;
Thus bid the warbled cadence 'plain,
And ſteep in tears the mournfull ſtrain;
A ſtrain to grace my obſequies,
Whilſt yet I view yon' golden ſkies.

Ye riſing hills that crown this ſhore,
Where Apis reign'd in years of yore,
Propitious hear me, nor diſdain
To let your echoes learn this ſtrain;
Barbaric tho' my voice and rude,
Well may its notes be underſtood;
Barbaric tho' this purfled ſtole,
Frounc'd around with linen roll,
This bluſhing veil tho' Sidon gave,
Ye hills of Apis hear, and ſave!

The vow perform'd, the Gods aton'd,
The pious rites with bleſſings crown'd,
Death diſtant waits with ſlacken'd pace,
Nor dares profane the ſacred place.
But will he now his foot repreſs?
Will the kind Gods their votary bleſs?
Ah me! theſe ſwelling waves of woe,
Whither, ah whither will they flow?

Ye riſing hills that crown this ſhore,
Where Apis reign'd in years of yore,
Propitious hear me, nor diſdain
To let your echoes learn this ſtrain;
Barbaric tho' my voice and rude,
Well may its notes be underſtood;
Barbaric tho' this purfled ſtole,
Frounc'd around with linnen roll;
This bluſhing veil tho' Sidon gave,
Ye hills of Apis hear, and ſave!

The daſhing o'er, the ſwelling ſail,
That caught the favorable gale,

Safe

Safe from the ſtorms, nor I complain,
Wafted our frail bark o'er the main.
All-ſeeing ſovereign fire, defend,
And guide us to a proſp'rous end;
Save us, O ſave the ſeed divine
Of our great mother's ſacred line;
From man's rude touch O ſave us free,
And help inſnared chaſtity!

Thou, virgin daughter of high Jove,
A virgin's vows hear, and approve;
Holding thy ſober, awefull ſtate,
Protect us from the touch we hate;
From bold incontinence ſecure,
Pure thyſelf, preſerve us pure;
Save us, O ſave the ſeed divine
Of our great mother's ſacred line;
From man's rude touch O ſave us free,
And help inſnared chaſtity!

If not, this glowing train, that trace
From Heav'n's high king their high-born race,

Shall

Shall voluntary victims go
To th' all-receiving realms below;
To their dread Gods for refuge fly,
If Heav'n's high pow'rs their aid deny.

O ſovereign Jove, ſhall wrath divine
For Io ſtill purſue her line?
Still thy dread queen in fury riſe,
And in her cauſe arm all the ſkies?
She wings theſe winds, this tempeſt ſpreads,
That burſts in vengeance o'er our heads.
O ſovereign Jove, for this thy ear
No meed of gratefull voice ſhall hear;
Thy ſon diſhonour'd, whom of yore
To thee disfigur'd Io bore.
Turn then, O turn thy gracious eye,
And hear us from thy throne on high!

DANAUS, CHORUS.

DANAUS.

Daughters, this hour demands your utmoſt prudence;
Your father's care, your old and faithfull pilot,

Hath

Hath held your helm ſafe o'er the dangerous deep;
Behoves you now at land with provident heed
To form your counſils, and attentive mark
My words. Yon' cloud of duſt, tho' tongueleſs, ſpeaks
An army nigh; I hear their wheels of braſs
Loud rattling on their axles; now I view
Chariots and horſe diſtinct, and ſhields, and ſpears
Far gleaming o'er the plain; the lords perchance
That rule theſe realms, inform'd of our arrival,
Advance to us; but bring they minds of peace,
Guiltleſs of violence, or with ruthleſs rage
Ruſh on this train, beſt ſit together, virgins,
Around this altar ſacred to the Gods
Preſiding o'er the games: a ſurer refuge
Than tow'r or ſhield war-proof an altar gives.
Go then with ſpeed, and reverent in your hands
Hold forth theſe ſupplicating branches crown'd
With ſnowy wreaths, enſigns of awefull Jove.
With modeſt, grave, and decent ſpeech receive
Theſe ſtrangers, as beſeems the wretched ſtate
Of unknown ſupplicants; declare at once
Diſtinct and brief the motives of your flight

Unſtain'd with blood: let not your roving eye
Dart the bold glance, impeaching modeſty.
Be not thy voice heard firſt, nor let its anſwers
Weary their ear; they quickly take offence;
Submiſſive urge thy plea, rememb'ring well
The pride of words ill ſuits thy low eſtate,
A fugitive, a ſtranger, in diſtreſs.

CHORUS.

Wiſe are thy counſils, and with reverend heed
Shall be remember'd, father; and may Jove,
The author of our race, look gracious on us.

DANAUS.

Quick be his aid, ſtrong guardian of our cauſe.

CHORUS.

Thus near I chuſe my ſeat.

DANAUS.

Supreme of Gods,
Pity our ſuff'rings, pity e'er we periſh.

CHORUS.

Look with an eye of mercy on thy ſuppliants,
Impart thy grace, and bleſs us with ſucceſs.

DANAUS.

DANAUS.

Addreſs you now this creſted bird of Jove.

CHORUS.

Thee, radiant Sun, thy tutelary rays
Streaming with gold, ſacred Apollo, God
Once exil'd from the ſkies, to thee I call,
Look on our woes, and pity wretched mortals.

DANAUS.

O ſuccour us, aſſiſt us, gracious pow'r.

CHORUS.

Whom of theſe Gods, whom yet ſhall we invoke?

DANAUS.

Mark you this trident? It declares the God.

CHORUS.

Safe haſt thou brought us o'er the ſwelling ſea,
Receive us then, and ſave us on the ſhore.

DANAUS.

This, in the Grecian rites, is Mercury.

CHORUS.

Nothing but good announce thou to the free.

DANAUS.

This common altar, ſacred to theſe Gods,

Approach with awe; the ground is holy; ſit
Like turtles trembling at the falcon's flight,
The winged foe of all the winged race,
Polluter of his kind; for how can bird,
That preys on bird, be pure? Or how can man,
That from th' unwilling father drags to marriage
Th' unwilling daughter, how can he be chaſt?
Or ſhall the haughty deed e'en after death
Eſcape unpuniſh'd in the realms below?
No: for another Jove, they ſay, holds there
His awefull ſeat, and to the guilty dead
Awards juſt vengeance. But be wary, try
The ſanctity of the place: and may it bring
The bleſſing of ſucceſs to crown your hopes.

PELASGUS, DANAUS, CHORUS.

PELASGUS.

What female train addreſs we here, and whence,
Gorgeouſly veſted in barbaric ſtoles
That float in many a fold? Our Argos ſees not
Her daughters thus array'd, nor Greece thro' all
Its ſtates. That thus without ſome previous herald,

The

The public hoſpitality not aſk'd,
Without ſafe conduct, you have boldly ventur'd
To land upon our coaſts, this is moſt ſtrange.
Only theſe boughs, as ſupplicants are wont,
You lay before theſe Gods that o'er the games
Preſide: hence Greece forms one conjecture only,
Of all beſides uncertain what to think,
Till your diſtinct relation clears our doubts.

CHORUS.

As to our habits, thy remarks are juſt.
But how ſhou'd I addreſs thee, as a man
Of private ſtation, or with hallow'd charge
Preſiding here, or chieftain of the ſtate?

PELASGUS.

Nay, anſwer me, and ſpeak with confidence.
Pelaſgus bids you, ſovereign of this land:
My ſire Palæcthon, of high anceſtry
Original with this earth: from me, their king,
The people take their name, and boaſt themſelves
Pelaſgians. O'er a wide extent of land,
Thro' which the Algus flows, and Strymon weſt,
From the Perrhæbians o'er the ſacred heights

Of

Of Pindus, to Pœonia, and beyond
The mountains of Dodona, ſpatious realms,
My empire ſtretches, bounded by the ſea
This way. In antient times the Apian plains
From Apis drew their honour'd name, the ſon
Of Phœbus, in his father's healing arts
Skill'd: from Naupactus came the heav'n-taught ſage
And clear'd the land of that peſtiferous brood,
Which the moiſt earth, foul with corrupted gore,
Of old engender'd, fierce with dragon-rage,
A cruel neighbourhood; their horrible pride
The matchleſs Apis quell'd, and freed the land
Of Argos. Hence in ſacred reverence
We hold his memory. Inſtructed thus
Say on, declare your race, and ought beſides:
But know we brook not the long pomp of words.

CHORUS.

Brief will I be, and plain. Of Argive race
We boaſt ourſelves, and draw our vaunted lineage
From her, the lowing mother, in her ſon
Supremely bleſt. All this my words ſhall prove.

PELASGUS.

PELASGUS.

Unplauſible your tale. Can it be, ſtrangers,
That you're of Argive race? Liker, I ween,
The Lybian damſels, in no wiſe reſembling
Our daughters: ſuch perchance the Nile might rear,
Such in the glowing tint the artiſt's hand
Might mark the Colchian dame; and ſuch, I hear,
The wand'ring Indians, mounted on their camels,
Along the tented plains out-ſtretching wide
To Æthiopia's cities; ſuch the troops
Of warlike Amazons; and were your hands
Arm'd with the poliſh'd bow, I might conjecture
You were of theſe; therefore I thirſt to know
More fully, how you are of Argive race.

CHORUS.

Fame ſpeaks of Io, in this Argive land
The ſacred guardian of the fane of Juno.
Her, as the common voice loudly reports ——

PELASGUS.

Reports it that the Thunderer, of her charms
Enamour'd, with a mortal mix'd the god?

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

And met in ſecret ſhades, conceal'd from Juno.

PELASGUS.

How ended then the bickerings of theſe pow'rs?

CHORUS.

The Argive queen transform'd her to an heifer.

PELASGUS.

Does Jove approach her in this fair-horn'd ſhape?

CHORUS.

Himſelf, they ſay, transforming to a bull.

PELASGUS.

What angry meaſures form'd his royal conſort?

CHORUS.

An herdſman ſhe aſſign'd ſtarr'd round with eyes.

PELASGUS.

What herdſman this, and how ſtarr'd round with eyes?

CHORUS.

The earth-born Argus: but him Hermes ſlew.

PELASGUS.

What new device to vex the wretched heifer?

CHORUS.

A winged peſt, arm'd with an horrid ſting:

Thoſe

Thoſe on the banks of Nile call it the bryze.

PELASGUS.

And drove her in long wand'rings from this land.

CHORUS.

Thy words, according well, ſpeak this for me.

PELASGUS.

Reach'd ſhe Canobus, and the walls of Memphis?

CHORUS.

There Jove with gentle hand ſooth'd her to reſt;
There planted his illuſtrious progeny.

PELASGUS.

Who from this heifer boaſts his race divine?

CHORUS.

Hence Epaphus receiv'd his name; from him
Libya, whoſe fair domains extended wide.

PELASGUS.

What other branch ſprung from this mighty root?

CHORUS.

Belus, the father of two ſons; my ſire,
Behold, is one.

PELASGUS.

Declare the ſage's name.

CHORUS.

Danaus: his brother, whom by name they call
Ægyptus, is the ſire of fifty ſons.
Thus have I ſhewn thee our high anceſtry;
Protect us then, ſupport an Argive train.

PELASGUS.

You ſeem indeed to draw your origen
Of old from hence: but ſay, how have you dar'd
To leave your father's houſe? What chance conſtrain'd you?

CHORUS.

King of Pelaſgia, various are the ills
Of mortal man; and never may'ſt thou ſee
Misfortune mounting on the ſelf-ſame wing.
Who wou'd have thought we ſhou'd have wing'd our flight
Thus unexpected to the coaſt of Argos
Allied of old, amazement in our van,
And ſtrong abhorrence of the nuptial bed!

PELASGUS.

Why, ſay'ſt thou, fly you to theſe Gods for refuge,
Holding theſe freſh-cropt branches crown'd with wreaths?

CHORUS.

That to the offspring of Ægyptus we

Might

Might not be ſlaves.

PELASGUS.

Whence this reluctance, ſay,
From hate? Or do your laws forbid ſuch nuptials?

CHORUS.

And who wou'd wiſh to make their friends their lords?

PELASGUS.

Yet thus the ſtrength of families gains force.

CHORUS.

And to the wretched death is not unwelcome.

PELASGUS.

In what wou'd you engage my honour to you?

CHORUS.

Not to enthrall us to Ægyptus' ſons,
Shou'd they demand us.

PELASGUS.

Arduous is the taſk
Thou wou'dſt injoin me, to provoke new wars.

CHORUS.

O'er him, that ſuccours, Juſtice holds her ſhield.

PELASGUS.

If from the firſt the cauſe were my concern.

CHORUS.

Revere theſe Gods, the guardians of your ſtate,
Encircled with this ſupplicating train.

PELASGUS.

Struck with religious horror I behold
Theſe branches ſhade this conſecrated ſeat.

CHORUS.

Dread then the wrath of Jove, who guards the ſuppliant.
Son of Palæcthon, hear me; with an heart
Prompt to relieve, king of Pelaſgia, hear.
Behold me ſupplicant, an exile, wand'ring,
Like the poor lamb, that on the craggy ſteep
Raiſes her mournfull voice, ſecure of help,
And warns her faithfull keeper of her danger.

PELASGUS.

I ſee a ſtranger train, with boughs new-pluck'd
Shading theſe Gods that o'er the games preſide.
May their arrival, tho' now ſtrangers here,
Yet hence deſcended, bring no dread event;
Nor from this ſudden, unexpected hap
Let war, which leſt we wiſh, diſturb our ſtate.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

May Themis, guardian of the ſuppliant, ſprung
From pow'rfull Jove, look on our harmleſs flight.
Nor from a younger let thy age diſdain
To learn the reverence due to ſupplicants,
From whoſe pure hands the fav'ring Gods accept
The gratefull offering.

PELASGUS.

Make not your requeſt
To me in private: if pollution ſtains
The public ſtate, the public has the charge
To expiate that ſtain; nor can my voice,
E'er conſultation with the people held,
Warrant the ſanction of the public faith.

CHORUS.

Thou art the ſtate; the public thou; thy voice,
Superior to controul, confirms the ſanction
This altar gives; thy ſole authority,
High-ſcepter'd monarch of a ſovereign throne,
Is here obey'd: religion's voice pleads for us;
Revere it, nor profane theſe hallow'd ſeats.

PELASGUS.

PELASGUS.

That profanation to mine enemies.
To grant you my protection cannot be
But with much danger; to reject your pray'rs,
Humanity forbids: perplex'd I fear
To act, or not to act, and fix my choice.

CHORUS.

On Heav'n's high throne he ſits, whoſe watchfull eye
Regards th' afflicted, when unfeeling pride
Denies that juſtice which the law aſks for them.
Reverence his pow'r; for when the ſufferer groans
With pangs unpitied, the fix'd wrath of Jove,
Protector of the ſuppliant, burns ſevere.

PELASGUS.

If by your country's laws Ægyptus' ſons,
As next of blood, aſſert a right in you,
Who ſhou'd oppoſe them? It behoves thee then
By your own laws to prove ſuch claim unjuſt.

CHORUS.

Ah never may I be perforce a thrall
To man! By heav'n-directed flight I break
The wayward plan of theſe deteſted nuptials.

Arm juſtice on thy ſide, and with her aid
Judge with that ſanctity the Gods demand.

PELASGUS.

No eaſy province: make not me your judge.
Great tho' my pow'r, it is not mine to act,
I told thee ſo, without my people's voice
Aſſenting; leſt, if ill ariſe, they ſay
By honouring ſtrangers thou' haſt undone thy country.

CHORUS.

Each equally allied, impartial Jove
Weighs each in equal balance; but repays
The impious deed with vengeance, to the juſt
Rewards their ſanctity. Why griev'ſt thou then
To æmulate the God, and act with juſtice?

PELASGUS.

Matter of high import haſt thou propos'd,
Which not admits heady and fitfull raſhneſs,
But deep deliberation, provident care,
Wiſely attentive to the general weal,
That hence no evil riſe, but the event
Be proſp'rous found, firſt, to the ſtate and me;
Next, that no force arreſt you here, nor we

Betray

Betray you refug'd in theſe hallow'd ſeats,
The hoſtages of Heav'n, and on our heads
Call ruin and the vengeance of the Gods,
That e'en in death acquits not. Seems not this
Matter of deep debate, and public care?

CHORUS.

Deliberate then with prudent care:
To thy counſils take with thee
Heav'n-commercing piety,
And be ſtedfaſt juſtice near.
Hark! methinks I hear them ſay,
Do not, mighty king, betray
Wretched exiles wand'ring far.
See me not with ruffian hand,
Refug'd at this ſhrine, profan'd,
Learn what boiſt'rous man may dare.
See me not with ruffled veſt
Rent unſeemly from my breaſt,
Looſe my treſſes waving round,
Bridled with this golden brede,
Led, like a reluctant ſteed,
From the Gods that guard this ground.

See each hallow'd image here,
And the awefull pow'rs revere:
At thy feet thy ſuppliant laid,
Mighty monarch, hear and aid!
And know, to thee, thy houſe, thy riſing race
Impartial juſtice ſhall repay the deed;
With glory's radiant crown thy virtues grace,
And righteous Jove ſhall ſanctify the meed.

PELASGUS.

Well; I have paus'd, and ponder'd; but each thought
Tells me the fluctuating tide perforce
Will drive me on a war with theſe, or thoſe;
And, like a ſhip with all its anchors out,
I muſt abide the ſtorm: nor will this end
Without calamity, and loſs, and woe.
When the rich houſe in deſolation ſinks,
Its wealth all waſted, bounteous Jove may raiſe
Its ſplendor to outſhine its former ſtate:
Or when the haughty tongue unſeemly bolts
The bitter taunt that ſtings the anguiſh'd heart,
The balm of honied words may heal the wound.
But kindred blood to reek upon the duſt—

No: let the altars blaze, and each due rite
Propitiate ev'ry God t' avert the ill.
Meanwhile I keep aloof, wiſhing t' appear
Ignorant of theſe diſputes: and may th' event
Be fortunate beyond my expectation.

CHORUS.

Hear the laſt words of deſperate modeſty.

PELASGUS.

Have I not heard? Speak on, I will attend.

CHORUS.

Seeſt thou theſe braided zones that bind our robes?

PELASGUS.

Ornaments theſe that ſuit your female ſtate.

CHORUS.

Know then the honeſt purpoſe theſe ſhall ſerve.

PELASGUS.

What wou'd thy words intend? Explain thyſelf.

CHORUS.

If honour ſhall not guard this female train—

PELASGUS.

How can theſe binding zones ſecure your ſafety?

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Hanging new trophies on theſe images.

PELASGUS.

Myſterious are thy words; ſpeak plainly to me.

CHORUS.

To tell thee plainly then, I mean ourſelves.

PELASGUS.

I hear the language of an anguiſh'd heart.

CHORUS.

Be ſure of that: I ſpeak our firm reſolves.

PELASGUS.

On ev'ry ſide inevitable ills
Surround me, like a flood, whoſe dang'rous ſurge
Drives me into a vaſt and gulphy ſea,
Where no kind harbour ſhelters from the ſtorm.
Shou'd I not yield you refuge, thou haſt nam'd
A deed of horror not to be ſurpaſs'd:
If with Ægyptus' ſons, whoſe veins are rich
With kindred blood, before our walls I try
The chance of war, what elſe, but bitter loſs
Can be th' event, when in a woman's cauſe
Men ſhed their warm blood on th' embattled plain?

Yet ſtrong conſtraint compells me to revere
The wrath of Jove, whoſe hoſpitable pow'r
Protects the ſuppliant, awefully ſevere.
And thou, age-honour'd father of theſe virgins,
Take in thy hands theſe boughs, place them with ſpeed
On other altars of our country Gods;
That all the citizens may ſee the ſigns
Of your arrival; but of me be ſure
Speak not a word: for this free people love
To tax authority with blame. Some eye
Perchance may melt with pity, and abhor
The boiſt'rous force of theſe injurious men;
Hence ſhall you find more favour from the people;
For nature prompts to ſuccour the diſtreſs'd.

DANAUS.

This reverend, this benevolent regard
To ſtrangers we receive with gratefull honour.
But from thy train ſend with me ſome t' attend,
To guide me to the altars of your Gods,
The guardians of your ſtate, and to their ſhrines,
With ſafety thro' your ſtreets; for much unlike
Our form, our garb to yours; nor does our Nile

See on its banks a race like thoſe, that tread
The verdant borders of your Inachus:
Hence inſolence may dare the rude affront;
The ſtranger friend by the friend's hand has bled.

PELASGUS.

Attend him; he ſays well; conduct his ſteps
Safe to the ſacred ſhrines, ſeats of the Gods,
Within our walls; and, as you paſs, avoid
Much talk with thoſe you meet, guiding this ſtranger,
Who claims protection from our hallow'd altars.

PELASGUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

For him thou' haſt order'd well; ſafe may he go
Appointed thus: but what becomes of me?
What ſhall I do? How wilt thou calm my fears?

PELASGUS.

Leave here thoſe boughs, the enſigns of your toils.

CHORUS.

I leave them, as thy voice and hand directs.

PELASGUS.

Seeſt thou that unfenc'd grove? Take ſhelter there.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

How ſhou'd th' unconſecrated grove protect me?

PELASGUS.

Let them have wings, we leave you not their prey.

CHORUS.

Than winged dragons they're more dreadfull to us.

PELASGUS.

With better omens be thy words auſpicious.

CHORUS.

No marvel if my mind ſinks with its fears.

PELASGUS.

But a king's fear is ominous of ill.

CHORUS.

Be all thy words, be all thy actions happy!

PELASGUS.

Your father will not long be abſent from you;
Meanwhile will I perſuade th' aſſembled people
If haply I may move them, to receive you
With gen'rous pity: him will I inſtruct
How beſt t' addreſs his ſpeech. Await th' event,
And ſupplicate the Gods, whoſe guardian pow'r
Is worſhip'd here, to grant your hearts' warm wiſh.

This

This done, I will return; and may perſuaſion
Attend me, and good fortune ſpeed my ſteps.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

Might of the mighty, king of kings,
Supremely bleſt amidſt the bleſt above,
Enthron'd in glory, righteous Jove,
From whom perfection to the perfect ſprings,
Hear us, O hear our fond requeſt,
To pity melt each gen'rous breaſt;
View this bold outrage with indignant eye,
And ſhield us from the injury:
O'ertake their proud bark on the purple main,
Sink it with all its ſable train;
Our female band with pity view,
And think from whoſe rich blood our honour'd race we drew.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

If Argive Io's blooming grace
Cou'd e'er thy fond enamour'd boſom move
To warm deſire, and rapt'rous love,
The pleaſing memory of her charms retrace.

From

From her our race divine we boaſt,
Not foreign to this Argive coaſt.
Her foot, in times of old, where now we tread,
Trod the flow'r-enamell'd mead;
And made with lowings loud the foreſts ring,
As from the bryze's tort'ring ſting
O'er many' a realm ſhe wander'd wide,
And dar'd the bounding waves, that world from world divide.

STROPHE 2.

Found her foot reſt on Aſia's ſhore,
On paſtoral Phrygia's, or on Lydia's plains,
Or Myſian Teuthra's wide domains?
Wildly Cilicia's rugged mountains o'er,
Pamphilia's various tribes among,
Each ceaſeleſs-flowing ſtream along,
Thro' corn-clad fields, and vallies ever green,
The hallow'd haunts of beauty's queen,
That winged peſt impell'd her foot to rove,
To the divine, all foſt'ring grove,
Thro' whoſe rich meads, impregn'd with ſnow,
Temp'ring the torrid beams Nile's healthfull waters flow.

ANTISTROPHE.

## ANTISTROPHE 2.

The race that then poſſeſs'd the land,
Struck with aſtoniſhment and pale affright,
Beheld the ſtrange, prodigious ſight:
Diſdaining to be touch'd ſhe trod the ſtrand,
The likeneſs of the lowing race
Now ſoft'ning ſweet to virgin grace:
They ſaw, and trembled. All her toils at laſt,
Her wand'rings wild, her tortures paſt,
What gentle hand——Eternal Lord 'twas thine;
Thy gentle hand, thy pow'r divine
Sooth'd, ſoftly ſooth'd her frentic fear,
And from her glowing cheek wip'd ſorrow's modeſt tear.

## EPODE.

Now thy pleaſing force employ,
All be love, and all be joy.
Riſing from the ſweet embrace,
Worthy of his radiant race,
Smiles the auſpicious boy.
Time prepares to ſtamp his name
Glorious in the roll of fame;

Earth, thro' ev'ry raptur'd ſcene,
Hails th' ætherial ſon of Jove.
Who cou'd charm Heav'n's angry queen?
Who her hoſtile hate remove?
This the deed of Jove alone,
And this his genuine ſon.
To whom, for juſtice when I raiſe the ſtrain,
To whom, ſave Jove, ſhou'd I complain?
Great, awefull author of our antient line,
Creative parent, independent lord,
Diſpoſer of the world, righteous, benign,
Sovereign, above the higheſt high ador'd;
Whene'er he deigns to grace ſome favour'd head,
Eaſy alike to him the will, the word, the deed.

DANAUS, CHORUS.

DANAUS.

Be of good courage, daughters; a decree,
Such as you wiſh, this gen'rous ſtate has paſs'd.

CHORUS.

Dear to my ſoul, with gratefull tidings fraught,
Hail, reverend parent! But inform us how

Paſs'd

Paſs'd the decree; what numbers favour'd us?

DANAUS.

Not one diſcordant voice jarr'd in their counſils.
The fire of youth glow'd in theſe aged veins,
When the whole people their uplifted hands
Wav'd in the air, to witneſs their aſſent
That we might be permitted here to dwell
Free, unreclaimable, inviolate:
That none preſume, native or ſtranger, hence
To lead us; and ſhou'd force be us'd, whoe'er
Aſſiſts not, him the public ſentence drives,
With infamy, an exile from his country.
This the Pelaſgian king advis'd, to us
Benevolent, declaring the fierce wrath
Of Jove, protector of the ſupplicant,
Cou'd not permit this firm and proſp'rous ſtate
To floriſh; but ſuch double inſult, offer'd
To ev'ry law of hoſpitality
Sacred and civil, wou'd with twofold vengeance
Draw ruin on it. When the Argives heard
Theſe arguments of winning eloquence,
Impatient of the uſual forms, they gave

With hands uplifted their concordant ſuffrage
Friendly to us: thus Jove decreed th' event.

CHORUS.

Come then, my ſiſters, for theſe pious Argives
Breath we ſome pious pray'r, whoſe ſolemn ſtrain
May reach the ear of Jove. And thou, Supreme,
God of the ſtranger, hear a ſtranger's voice
Sincere, unblam'd; and ratify our vows!

STROPHE.

Ye progeny of Jove, whoſe awefull pow'r
In yon' ætherial plain
Fixes the glories of your reign,
Bend from your radiant ſeats your ear,
Attentive to a virgin's pray'r,
And on this gen'rous race your choiceſt bleſſings ſhow'r.
Never may war, whoſe wanton rage
The thund'ring falchion joys to wield,
Joys, when embattled hoſts engage,
To mow with ruthleſs arm the field;
Never with rude diſcordant roar
Affright the echoes of this ſhore;

Never

Never with hoſtile hand
Wave round theſe glitt'ring tow'rs the blazing brand.
Soft-ey'd humanity dwells here,
That melting to the ſuppliant's tear
Aſſerts our hopeleſs cauſe;
And ſpotleſs piety, whoſe breaſt
Submiſs reveres Jove's high beheſt,
And hoſpitable laws.
Your ſacred ſpirit inſpires the free
To form the gen'rous, bold decree,
And man's rude force diſdain;
To caſt on Heav'n's dread Lord their eye,
The terrors of his vengeance fly,
Nor ſcorn our female train:
He o'er the impious roof his thunders rolls,
And awefull in his wrath appalls the guilty ſouls.

ANTISTROPHE.

Our kindred train, ſuppliants of holy Jove,
Pelaſgia's ſons revere,
And make our wrongs their gen'rous care.
For this at ev'ry hallow'd ſhrine
Propitious be each pow'r divine;

For

For this beneath this ſolemn-ſhaded grove
Our raptur'd invocations riſe,
And Heav'n ſhall hear the pious ſtrains.
Ah! never may malignant ſkies
Blaſt the freſh glories of your plains:
Nor peſtilence with pois'nous breath
Waſte your thin towns with livid death:
Nor war's ſtern pow'r deface
The blooming flow'rs that youth's fair ſeaſon grace.
Still may your chiefs, a reverend band,
Around the hallow'd altars ſtand;
And ardent for the ſtate
Pour the warm vow to Heav'n's high Lord,
The great, the juſt; whoſe will ador'd
With hoar law tempers fate.
Still riſe new chiefs, a lengthen'd line,
(Kind on their birth, Diana, ſhine!)
The brave, the wiſe, the good:
But never diſcord's dread alarms
Your mad'ning cities rouſe to arms,
And ſtain your ſtreets with blood:

Nor

Nor pale diſeaſe her ſickly dews diſplay,
Touch'd by thy golden beams, ambroſial fount of day.

EPODE.

Fav'ring ſeaſons grace the year,
Crown with rich fruits your cultur'd plains;
The joyfull flock, the ſportive ſteer,
Bound wanton o'er your wide domains.
Each immortal ſhow'ring treaſures,
Wake the ſoft melodious meaſures;
Let the chaſtly-warbled lay
The muſes' rapture-breathing ſhell obey.
Firm may the honours of your laws remain,
And prudence in your counſils reign:
Juſt to yourſelves, and to the ſtranger kind,
May peace to ſleep conſign the bloodleſs ſword;
Each honour to your country's Gods aſſign'd;
Each laurel'd ſhrine with hallow'd rites ador'd;
The parent's hoary head with reverence crown'd;
View this, ye righteous Gods, and ſtretch protection round!

DANAUS.

DANAUS, CHORUS.

DANAUS.

I like this well: wiſe are theſe votive ſtrains.
But tho' your father brings unwelcome tidings,
New, and unlook'd for, fear not you th' event.
From yon' high mound, where firſt you ſuppliant ſtood,
I ſaw a ſhip, I mark'd its waving ſtreamer,
Its ſwelling ſails, and all its gallant trim:
Its prow with heedfull eye obſerves its way,
Obedient to the helm that guides behind;
Unfriendly ſight! the ſailors too I mark'd,
Conſpicuous in white robes their ſable limbs.
Th' attendant veſſels, proudly riding, ſweep
The watry way; ſhe foremoſt near the land
Now furls her ſails, and all the ſhouting crew
Bend to the eager oar. Behoves you now
Sedate and ſage attention, nor neglect
Theſe Gods. I haſte to bring their gen'rous aid,
The patrons, the protectors of your cauſe.
Haply ſome herald may be ſent, with charge
To claim you as their prize: it ſhall not be:
Fear not th' event: but ſhou'd our aid come ſlow,

Forget

Forget not the protection of this place.
Be comforted: the day, the hour ſhall come,
When he, that dares affront the Gods, ſhall feel
Their chaſt'ning vengeance burſting on his head.

CHORUS.

How my frame trembles! Ah, my father, ſee
With winged ſpeed the ſhips arrive; between
No interval of time: my ſtiff'ning limbs
Are chain'd with fear, and ev'ry hope of ſafety,
If ſafety lies in flying far, is loſt.

DANAUS.

Since this decree is paſs'd, fear not, my child;
Argos, I know, will arm in your defence.

CHORUS.

Fatally fierce they are, and on their pride
Deſtruction waits, and never-fated war,
Theſe ſons of old Ægyptus, not to thee
Unknown: E'en now their firm-compacted ſhips
Black o'er the angry deep inſulting ride,
Eager to land their ſable-tinctur'd hoſts.

DANAUS.

And they ſhall find an hoſt, whoſe toil-ſtrung arms

Relax not in the ſun's meridian heat.

CHORUS.

Forſake me not, ah, leave me not alone,
I pray thee, father: a forſaken woman
Is very weak: their wily, faithleſs minds,
Like obſcene crows, ſpare not the hallow'd altar.

DANAUS.

Now fair befall our cauſe, if their mad rage,
Inſulting thee, my child, inſults the Gods.

CHORUS.

Neither theſe tridents, nor this ſolemn ſcene
Will awe them to refrain their impious hands.
They ſcorn the Gods, and with unhallow'd force
Ruſh madly on, like ſavage, rav'ning dogs.

DANAUS.

But dogs, they ſay, yield to the maſt'ring wolves;
And the ſoft reed to the firm ſpiked corn.

CHORUS.

They have the force of wild and ſavage beaſts;
We muſt eſcape them therefore, as we may.

DANAUS.

Slow are th' advances of a naval train;

Slow

Slow the arrangements of the ſhips; the care
To fix the cables, ſlow; th' experienc'd chiefs
Truſt not too ſoon the biting anchor's hold,
If ſtation'd where no harbour winds around:
And when the golden ſun withdraws his beams,
The gloom of night brings many' an anxious care;
Nor dare they, till their veſſels ride ſecure,
Attempt to land. But take thou heed, nor let
Thy fears impell thee to neglect the Gods;
But aſk their aid. The ſtate will not diſdain
My age, that tells with youthfull warmth its tidings.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

Ye riſing hills, whoſe reverend heads
Majeſtic wave their awe-commanding ſhades,
What woes our ſhudd'ring ſouls await?
Or flying on the wings of fear,
In ſome cavern dark and drear
Deep ſhall we plunge, and hide us from our fate?
Oh that I cou'd as ſmoke ariſe,
That rolls its black wreaths thro' the air;

Mix with the clouds, that o'er the ſkies
Show their light forms, and diſappear:
Or like the duſt be toſt
By ev'ry ſportive wind, till all be loſt!

ANTISTROPHE 1.

Such thoughts in deep deſpair I roll,
The gloom of ſorrow black'ning on my ſoul.
Ah father, the vex'd ocean round
What horrors ſtruck thy aching ſight?
Diſmay, and pale affright,
And wild amazement ſink me to the ground.
Shall then the baſe, deteſted band
With rude touch ſeize us for their own?
No: rather ſhall this daring hand
Prepare for death the conſcious zone;
Rather in deep diſdain
My pale ſhade ſink to Pluto's dreary reign.

STROPHE 2.

Oh might I ſit ſublime in air,
Where watry clouds the freezing ſnows prepare!
Or on a rock whoſe threat'ning brow,

Th' aerial

Th' aerial vulture's unreach'd ſeat,
In ſolitary ſtate
Frowns ruinous o'er th' affrighted waſte below:
Roll'd headlong down its rugged ſide,
A mangled carcaſs let me lie,
E'er drag'd a pale, unwilling bride,
Victim to ſad neceſſity;
And my indignant heart
Feel the keen wounds of ſorrow's tort'ring dart.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

Throw me, e'er that deteſted day,
To prowling dogs and rav'nous birds a prey.
No form of death affrights me now:
O thou, aſſign'd the wretches' friend,
To bid his miſeries end,
And in oblivion's balm to ſteep his woe;
Come, gentle death, e'er that ſad hour
Which drags me to the nuptial bed;
And let me find in thy ſoft pow'r
A refuge from the force I dread;
O ſpread thy ſable cloud,
And in its unpierc'd gloom our ſorrows ſhroud!

EPODE.

## EPODE.

Higher let your voices riſe,
And ſwell the choral deſcant to the ſkies,
Notes of ſuch a lofty vein,
That Gods may liſten to the ſolemn ſtrain!
Eternal Sire, from Heav'n's high throne,
If thy indignant eye-balls glow
With vengeance at foul deeds below,
Look down, thou Sovereign of the World, look down:
Ægyptus' ſons, a ruffian race,
Our flying footſteps chace;
And on our trembling, weeping band
Advance to lay their vengefull hand:
Extend thy golden ſcales,
For without thee what mortal worth avails?
By land, by ſea,
They ſeek their prey;
Oh, e'er they ſeize it, may the ruffians die!
Again I raiſe the mournfull cry.
They come, they come, the haughty foes:
Theſe are but preludes to my woes.
To yon' ſtrong rampires bend your flight;

By

By ſea, by land they ruſh ſevere,
And with their ſtern and threat'ning air
The ſoftneſs of our ſex affright.
Look down, thou Sovereign of the World, and ſave!

HERALD, CHORUS.

HERALD.

Hence to the ſhip, hence with your utmoſt ſpeed.

CHORUS.

No, never, never; drag me, drag me, ſtab me,
Rend from theſe mangled limbs my bleeding head.

HERALD.

Hence to the ſhip, abandon'd wretches, hence,
That waits to waft you, with your injur'd lords,
O'er the wide billows of yon' briny deep.
Haſte, or this ſpear, with bridal garlands bound,
Taught a leſs gentle office, there ſhall place you
Smarting with many' a wound; there ſit, and ſigh.
No more, I charge you, of theſe froward moods,
Or force ſhall drive them from you.

CHORUS.

Woe is me!

HERALD.

HERALD.

Haſte, quit theſe ſeats, haſte to the ſhips, and go
Inviolate to the city of the pious.

CHORUS.

Ah, never may theſe eyes again behold
That rich enlivening ſtream, which he who drinks
Feels his freſh blood dance lively in his veins.
My unpolluted life amidſt theſe ſeats,
Theſe ſacred ſeats, old man, preſerve me ſacred.

HERALD.

Nay, tell not me; but to the ſhip, the ſhip,
Averſe or not averſe, quick ſhalt thou go;
Or vengeance, chaſt'ning vengeance to thy feet
Add wings, and up the bark's tall ſides purſue thee.

CHORUS.

Ah woe, woe, woe! Barbarian, may the winds
In all their fury hurl thee on the rocks
Of rough Cilicia's brow; or daſh thy corſe
An outcaſt on the ſwelling ſands beneath.

HERALD.

Cry, ſhriek, invoke the Gods; yet ſhalt thou not
Eſcape the ſhip of Ægypt; louder ſhriek,

Cry

Cry woe, and woe: if the name pleaſe thee, take it.

CHORUS.

Ah wretched me! Pollution of the land,
How fierce he yells! Inſolent wretch, away,
Thy rude touch wounds me: For this ruffian force,
Riſe, mighty Nile, whelm him beneath thy floods!

HERALD.

Hence, I command you, to the rolling veſſel
Inſtantly hence: if one preſumes to linger,
I pay no reverence to your criſped locks,
This hand perforce ſhall drag her by her treſſes.

CHORUS.

Ah me, immortal Sire! Inſolent Force
Will hurry me away: it drags me now
Intangled in its nets; and all my hopes
Are vaniſh'd like a dream, a duſky dream.
Earth, I adjure thee, ſhield me; ſhield me, Jove,
God of this land; ſave me in this hard conflict.

HERALD.

Gods of this land! They awe not me; my youth
They nouriſh'd not, nor to old age upheld me.

CHORUS.

Near me the ſerpent rolls his train, and ſoon
Will, like a pois'nous viper, dart upon me.
Earth, I adjure thee ſhield me; ſhield me, Jove,
God of this land; ſave me in this hard conflict.

HERALD.

If one of you perverſely lingers here,
Your richly purfled ſtoles ſhall find no mercy.

CHORUS.

Ye rulers of the city, Force o'erpow'rs me.

HERALD.

You ſhall ſee many rulers, doubt not, ſoon,
Ægyptus' ſons; no anarchy is here.

CHORUS.

Unlook'd for ruin comes, O king, upon us.

HERALD.

I muſt uſe force, I ſee, and pluck you hence
Drag'd by the locks, ſince my words move you not.

PELASGUS, HERALD, CHORUS.

PELASGUS.

Whence theſe outrageous deeds? How dares thy pride

Offer this inſult to the land, where dwell
Pelaſgian men? Or didſt thou deem that women
Alone inhabit here? Thy ſavage acts,
Barbarian, touch the dignity of Greece.
Learn thy miſtake then, and thine high offence.

HERALD.

Againſt what law, what right have I offended?

PELASGUS.

Firſt, doſt thou know thou art a ſtranger here?

HERALD.

A ſtranger here I found what I had loſt.

PELASGUS.

To whom haſt thou addreſs'd thee for protection?

HERALD.

To Mercury, who directs the ſtranger's ſearch.

PELASGUS.

The Gods! Thou haſt no reverence for the Gods.

HERALD.

Yes, for the Gods of Nile, an holy reverence.

PELASGUS.

But none for theſe, if right I underſtand thee.

HERALD.

Theſe lead I hence; and who ſhall take them from me?

PELASGUS.

Dare but to touch them, dear ſhalt thou abide it.

HERALD.

Is this your hoſpitality to ſtrangers?

PELASGUS.

I owe the ruffian none, that robs the Gods.

HERALD.

Go then, announce this to Ægyptus' ſons.

PELASGUS.

It ſuits not me; my ſoul diſdains the office.

HERALD.

Then let me ſpeak, and plainly; it becomes
An herald's office to ſpeak all things plain.
How ruffians, ſay, how robbers of the Gods,
This kindred train, that comes to claim theſe women?
Not by the voice of evidence does Mars
Decide theſe things; nor for a mulct of gold
Compound the dreadfull quarrel; e'er it ends
Many ſhall ſhed their dear blood in the duſt,
Many lie low on earth, and bite the ground.

PELASGUS.

PELASGUS.

Hear then what honour prompts, what juſtice dictates,
And bear it to the partners of thy voyage.
If theſe approve, if their free will incline them,
Lead them, if gentle words win their aſſent.
This firm decree the ſuffrage of the ſtate
Has render'd ſacred, not by force to yield
A train of females; this reſolve, be ſure,
Is ſtrongly fix'd, and never can be ſhaken.
Tho' not engrav'd on tablets, nor enroll'd
In ſeal-ſtamp'd volumes, my free voice declares it
In words of plaineſt import. Take thy anſwer;
Hence from my ſight, with thy beſt ſpeed begone.

HERALD.

Know then a riſing war awaits thy choice:
Valour and conqueſt crown the helms of men.

PELASGUS.

You ſhall be met by men, whoſe lively blood
Dull draughts of barley wine have never clog'd.
Now virgins, with your train of faithfull friends,
Diſmiſs your fears; enter this town, whoſe walls
Strong-built, and crown'd with many' a bullwark, lift

Their

Their towred heads impregnable: within
The ſtate has many ſtructures; nor is mine
A thin inhabitation; ſuch an houſe,
Where chearfull numbers live in wealth and ſplendor,
May haply pleaſe you: if a private manſion,
To your own uſe devote, be more your wiſh;
The beſt of theſe, the moſt approv'd, is yours;
Make your free choice: I will protect you; all
This friendly ſtate, ſupporting their decree,
Will ſhield you. What, wiſh you more pow'rfull guardians?

CHORUS.

For theſe thy bounties may the bounteous Gods
Show'r bleſſings on thy head, thou gen'rous king
Of brave Pelaſgia! But benevolent
Send us our father Danaus, on whoſe firm
And provident counſils we rely. His care
And ſage advice is needfull, where to chuſe
Our dwelling, our ſecure retreat. The tongue
Of Slander is too prompt with wanton malice
To wound the ſtranger: Act we then with caution.

PELASGUS.

With honour, lovely virgins, with the voice

Of

Of fair-applauding fame amidſt our city
Shall your appointment be, where'er your father
Aſſigns to each her manſion and attendants.

DANAUS, CHORUS.

DANAUS.

Daughters, it well becomes you to theſe Argives,
As to th' immortal Gods, to offer vows,
Libation, ſacrifice, and ev'ry rite
Religion knows; ſo liberal their protection,
So readily they lent their friendly ears,
And favour'd all my deeds againſt theſe youths,
Theſe kindred youths, whoſe headlong pride thus haunts you.
Behold theſe ſpears around, to me aſſign'd
An honorable guard, that no rude hand
With barb'rous rage may lift the ſecret ſword,
And with my blood pollute the pious land.
This grace, this condeſcenſion claims my thanks,
And you with gratefull minds honour it ever.
To all the wiſe inſtructions of your father,
Grav'd in your faithfull tablets, grave theſe alſo,
That after-times may hold this ſtranger train

In

In reverence. Know then this, The tongue of malice
Is ever prompt to wound the ſtranger's fame
With ſtings of infamy: I charge you then
Diſgrace me not. I ſee—your blooming age,
Inforcing ſoft deſire; I know how hard
To guard the lovely flow'rs that grace that ſeaſon.
Beaſts love to riot on their ſweets, and man,
Each inſect, and each wanton-winged bird.
The Queen of Love proclaims their opening bloom;
Ah, wou'd ſhe ſuffer it remain uncropt!
And on the delicate tints, that kindling glow
On beauty's vermeil cheek, each roving youth
With melting wiſhes darts the amorous glance.
We brook not this: elſe why theſe various toils,
Theſe wand'rings o'er the wide-extended main?
Let us not work this ſcandal to ourſelves,
And triumph to our foes. Two manſions here
Are offer'd to your choice; Pelaſgus one
Wou'd give, and one the ſtate; beneath whoſe roof
No male attendant waits: the choice is eaſy.
Only obſerve theſe precepts of your father,
And guard with headfull care your virgin honour.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

O may the pow'rs of Heav'n in all beſides
Be gracious to us; in our virgin honour
Have confidence: be their high wills unchang'd,
I ſhall not deviate from my mind's fix'd plan.

CHORUS.

Go then, ye pure, ye pious train,
In triumph go to thoſe bleſs'd pow'rs,
That o'er this ſtate extend their reign
Imperial guardians of theſe tow'rs;
Imperial guardians of theſe glades,
Along whoſe hallow'd ſhades
His dark'ning ſtream old Eraſinus rolls:
With courage arm your ſouls.
No more to Nile's deep floods belong
The warbled voice, the raptur'd ſong;
Our praiſe Pelaſgia's towns demand;
And each freſh fount, that loves to lead
His humid train thro' grove, thro' mead,
And rolls luxuriance thro' the land.

Virgin Diana, bend thine eye,
And piteous of a virgin's woes,
O ſave enſnared chaſtity,
From the rude touch of hated foes:
Nor ſee thy ſtruggling vot'ries led
Where Venus decks the bed!
Nor, Queen of Love, ſhall our mellifluous lays
Be ſilent in thy praiſe:
For thou, next Heav'n's imperial queen,
In higheſt grace with Jove art ſeen,
And mighty deeds declare thy pow'r:
The paſſions hear thy ſoft controul;
Thy ſweet voice melts the willing ſoul,
Enchanted with thy honied lore.

Round thee, where'er thou lead'ſt the way,
Joyfull the frolic Cupids rove;
And as their antic ſports they play,
Whiſper the harmony of love.
But what have I with love or joy?
My peace wild fears annoy,

The miſeries of flight, purſuit's alarms,
And ſlaughter-threat'ning arms:
Why elſe the quick, the fav'ring gales
Waft o'er the waves their flying ſails?

SEMICHORUS.

This is the fix'd decree of fate;
And thus high Heav'n's unbounded Lord,
Pronounc'd th' irrevocable word,
And doom'd us to the nuptial ſtate.

CHORUS.

Ah, never may his ſovereign will
Me to Ægyptus' ſons unite!

SEMICHORUS.

This is to graſp at ſhadows ſtill,
And ſooth thy ſoul with vain delight.

CHORUS.

Know'ſt thou his will? Or has thine eye
Look'd thro' futurity?

SEMICHORUS.

His mind I dare not ſcan, immenſe, profound:
And thou thy wiſhes bound;

'Gainſt Heav'n's high will exclaim no more,
But in mute meekneſs learn t' adore.

CHORUS.

Almighty Sire, whoſe healing hand
Sooth'd thy lov'd Io's ſoul to reſt,
With comfort chear this ſorrowing breaſt,
And ſave us from this hoſtile band!
For me thro' fortune's cloud hope beams her ray,
And from that bright'ning part goes bright'ning on;
So right ſucceeding right ſhall force its way,
And the good Gods compleat what Greece begun.

# THE SEVEN CHIEFS AGAINST THEBES.

## The Seven Chiefs againſt Thebes.

BESIDES this Siege of Thebes Æſchylus wrote three Tragedies on the ſubjects of Laius, Œdipus, and the Sphinx, which are loſt. Woe to the ravenous jaws of time, that have devoured theſe precious morſels of antiquity; we ſhould otherwiſe have had from this great maſter a regular, and, no doubt, an intereſting account of this illuſtrious and unfortunate family. It is ſaid that Æſchylus particularly valued himſelf upon this tragedy: not without reaſon; for it has all that bold painting, with which we might expect his martial genius would embelliſh ſuch a ſubject. Always magnificent, he has fixed the ſcene in Thebes before the principal temple: the claſh of arms, the neighing of the horſes, and the ſhouts of the ſoldiers are heard: Eteocles appears ſurrounded with the citizens, whom he animates to defend the walls: in the mean time the Chorus, which is compoſed of Theban Ladies, diſtracted with their fears are hanging on the ſtatues of the Gods that adorn the area before the temple. Longinus has remarked on the ſublimity of the dialogue; it is worthy an experienced veteran and a brave young king arming in defence of his crown, his life and his honour; it is worthy of Æſchylus. The characters of the Seven Chiefs, that command in the attack, are exquiſitely marked and varied; and their impetuous ferocity is admirably contraſted with the calm and deliberate courage of thoſe appointed to oppoſe them. The ſhields of ſix of theſe chiefs are charged

with armorial * bearings expreſſive of their characters, and as regular as if they had been marſhaled by an herald at arms: the impreſſes are deviſed with a fine imagination and wonderfull propriety.

The judicious choice of the perſons of the Chorus forms one of the principal graces of this tragedy, as it gave the poet an opportunity of mixing the natural timidity of the female character with the animated and firey daring of heroes; the fears of theſe daughters of Cadmus preſenting nothing to their imagination but the ſcenes of diſtreſs and horror, which the inſolence of conqueſt ſpreads thro' a vanquiſhed and plundered city, and this painted in the warmeſt colours, in the ſtrongeſt ſtile of Æſchylus.

Beſides the intrinſic beauty of this tragedy, which is very ſtriking, it has to us this further merit, that it gave birth to three the fineſt poems of antiquity, the Antigone of Sophocles, the Phœniſſæ of Euripides, and the Thebaid of Statius.

* The origen of theſe inſignia is not known, but we have here a proof of their high antiquity; they were borne as marks of noble deſcent, or illuſtrious action, and as ſuch were of diſtinguiſhing honour: but ſhould they in the ambitious meanneſs of future times (this age is too pure to admit of ſuch a proſtitution) be *aſſumed* by ſuch as are neither diſtinguiſhed by high birth nor virtuous action, by ſuch as owe their wealth to the wantonneſs of fortune, or to deeds that deſerve a different kind of elevation, they muſt neceſſarily ſuffer great *abatements of honour*, and the proud *atchievents* of virtue ſink into *common charges*.

# Perſons of the Drama.

ETEOCLES.

SOLDIER.

ANTIGONE.

ISMENE.

HERALD.

CHORUS of THEBAN VIRGINS.

# THE SEVEN CHIEFS AGAINST THEBES.

## ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

### ETEOCLES.

YE citizens of Cadmus, it behoves
The man that guides the helm of ſtate, to ſpeak
What the ſad times require; nor ſuffer ſleep
To weigh his eyelids down. For if ſucceſs
Attends our toils, to the good Gods we bow,

The

The authors of the bleſſing: Shou'd misfortune,
Avert it Heav'n! befall, Eteocles
Shall hear his name alone wide thro' the city
Inſulted by each tongue, that vents its ſpleen
In mutinous reproach, or loud laments:
From which may Jove, the guardian of our ſtate,
Defend the ſons of Cadmus! But this hour
Calls on you all, whether your flow'ry ſpring
Yet wants the prime of manhood, or your age
Puts forth its firmeſt ſtrength, t' exert your pow'rs,
Well it becomes you, to defend the city,
The altars of the Gods preſiding here,
(Ah, never may their honours be effac'd!)
Your children, and this land, your common parent,
And deareſt nurſe, who on her foſt'ring ſoil
Upheld with bounteous care your infant ſteps,
And train'd you to this ſervice, that your hands
In her defence might lift the faithfull ſhield.
E'en to this day indeed the Gods incline
To favour us; and tho' ſo long immur'd
Within our rampires, each bold work of war
Hath proſper'd in our hands. But now the ſeer,

That

That liſtens to the flight of birds, and thence
Forms in his præſcient mind the ſure preſage,
Guiltleſs of fire, from their oracular wings
Draws his deep ſkill, and warns us that the pow'rs
Of Greece, combin'd againſt us, in the night
Advancing, meditate the dark aſſault.
Haſte all then to the walls, haſte to the bulwarks
With all your arms, fill ev'ry tow'r, ſecure
Each paſs, ſtand firm at ev'ry gate, be bold,
Nor fear th' aſſailing numbers: Heav'n is with us.
Meanwhile on ev'ry quarter have I ſent
T' obſerve their forces, and deſcry their march:
By theſe, not charg'd, I truſt, in vain to watch,
Inform'd I guard againſt the wiles of war.

SOLDIER, ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

SOLDIER.

Illuſtrious king of Thebes, I bring thee tidings
Of firm aſſurance from the foe; theſe eyes
Beheld each circumſtance. Seven valiant chiefs
Slew on the black-orb'd ſhield the victim bull,
And dipping in the gore their furious hands,

In

In ſolemn oath atteſt the God of war,
Bellona, and the carnage-loving pow'r
Of terror, ſworn from their firm baſe to rend
Theſe walls, and lay their ramparts in the duſt;
Or, dying, with their warm blood ſteep this earth.
Each in Adraſtus' car ſome dear remembrance
Piled to their diſtant parents, whilſt their eyes
Drop'd tears, but on their face was no remorſe.
Each ſoul of iron glowing with the rage
Of valour, as the lion when he glares
Determin'd battle. What I now relate
Sleeps not, nor lingers: round the urn I left them,
By lot deciding to what gate each chief
Shall lead his forces. Theſe againſt ſelect
The beſt, the braveſt of the ſons of Thebes,
And inſtant at the gates aſſign their ſtations.
For all in arms the Argive hoſt comes on
Involv'd in duſt, and from the ſnorting ſteeds
The thick foam falls, and dews the whiten'd fields.
Be thine the provident pilot's gen'rous care,
Guard well the town, e'er yet the ſtorm aſſails it;
E'en now the waves of war roar o'er the plain:

Seize then this fair occaſion, inſtant ſeize it.
My faithfull eye this day ſhall hold the watch,
That, well inform'd, no danger may ſurprize thee.

ETEOCLES.

O Jove, O Earth, O all ye guardian Gods;
And thou dread curſe, the fury of my father,
Of fatal pow'r, O rend not from its roots
This ruin'd city by th' inſulting foe
Trampled in duſt, her ſweet Helladian tongue
Silent, and all her ſacred fires extinct!
Ah, never let this land, this town of Cadmus
Bend her free neck beneath the ſervile yoke!
Protect her, ſave her; as you ſhare her honours
I plead: A floriſhing ſtate reveres the Gods.

CHORUS.

Woe, woe, intolerable woe!
Fierce from their camps the hoſts advance,
Before their march with thund'ring tread
Proud o'er the plain their firey courſers prance,
And hither bend their footſteps dread:
Yon' cloud of duſt that choaks the air,
A true tho' tongueleſs meſſenger,

Marks plain the progreſs of the foe.
And now the horrid claſh of arms,
That, like the torrent, whoſe impetuous tide
Roars down the mountain's craggy ſide,
Shook the wide fields with fierce alarms,
With nearer terrors ſtrikes our ſouls,
And thro' our chaſt receſſes rolls:
Hear, all ye pow'rs of Heav'n, propitious hear,
And check the furies of this threat'ning war!

The crouded walls around
Loud clamours rend the ſky;
Whilſt rang'd in deep array th' embattled pow'rs
Their ſilver ſhields lift high,
And, level with the ground
To lay their rampir'd heads, aſſail our tow'rs.
What guardian God ſhall I implore?
Bending at what ſacred ſhrine
Call from their happy ſeats what pow'rs divine,
And ſuppliant ev'ry ſculptur'd form adore?
The time demands it: why then, why delay?—
The ſound of arms ſwells on my' affrighted ear.—

Hold

Hold now the pall, the garland, as you pray.—
Hark! 'tis the rude claſh of no ſingle ſpear.
Stern God of war,
Doſt thou prepare
Thy ſacred city to betray?
Look down, look down;
O ſave thine own;
Nor leave us to the foe a prey:
If e'er thy ſoul had pleaſure in the brave,
God of the golden helm, hear us, and ſave!

And all ye pow'rs, whoſe guardian care
Protects theſe walls, this favour'd land,
O hear theſe pious, ſuppliant ſtrains;
Propitious aid us, aid a virgin band,
And ſave us from the victor's chains!
For all around with creſted pride
High waves the helm's terrific tide,
Toſt by the furious breath of war.
And thou, great Jove, almighty ſire,
Confound with foul defeat theſe Argive pow'rs,
Whoſe arms inſult our leaguer'd tow'rs,

And fright our ſouls with hoſtile fire.
The reins that curb their proud ſteeds 'round,
Rattle, and death is in the ſound:
'Gainſt our ſev'n gates ſev'n chiefs of high command,
In arms ſpear-proof, take their appointed ſtand.

Daughter of Jove, whoſe ſoul
Glows at th' embattled plain:
And thou, by whom the pawing ſteed aroſe,
Great monarch of the main
Curb'd by thy ſtrong controul;
From our fears free us, free us from our foes!
On thee, ſtern Mars, again I call:
Haſte thee, God, and with thee bring
The Queen of Love, from whoſe high race we ſpring;
If Cadmus e'er was dear, defend his wall!
Thou terror of the ſavage, Phœbus, hear,
In all thy terrors ruſh upon the foe!
Chaſt Virgin-huntreſs, Goddeſs ever dear,
Wing the keen arrow from thy ready bow!
Hark! fraught with war
The groaning car,

Imperial

Imperial Juno! ſhakes the ground;
Fierce as they paſs,
The wheels of braſs,
Dear Virgin-huntreſs! roar around:
The gleaming luſtre of the brandiſh'd ſpear
Glares terribly acroſs the troubled air.

Alas my country! muſt theſe eyes,
Muſt theſe ſad eyes behold thy fall?
Ah, what a ſtorm of ſtones, that flies,
And wing'd with ruin ſmites the walls!
O Phœbus! at each crouded gate
Begins the dreadfull work of fate;
Each arm the thund'ring falchion wields,
And claſhes on the ſounding ſhields.
O thou, whoſe kind and matchleſs might,
Bleſt Onca, thro' the glowing fight
Obedient conqueſt joys t' attend,
All our ſev'n gates, dread queen, defend!
And all ye mighty, guardian pow'rs,
That here preſide, protect our tow'rs:

Nor

Nor the war-waſted town betray,
To fierce and diſſonant foes a prey!
Ye Gods, deliverers of this land,
To whom we ſtretch the ſuppliant hand,
Hear us, O hear our virgin pray'r,
And ſhow that Thebes is yet your care!
By ev'ry ſolemn temple, ev'ry ſhrine,
Each hallow'd orgie, and each rite divine,
Each honour to your pow'r in rev'rence paid,
Hear us, ye guardian Gods, hear us, and aid!

ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

ETEOCLES.

It is not to be borne, ye wayward race:
Is this your beſt, is this the aid you lend
The ſtate, the fortitude with which you ſteel
The ſouls of the beſieg'd, thus falling down
Before theſe images to wail, and ſhriek
With lamentations loud? Wiſdom abhors you.
Nor in misfortune, nor in dear ſucceſs,
Be woman my aſſociate: if her pow'r

Bears

Bears ſway, her inſolence exceeds all bounds;
But if ſhe fears, woe to that houſe and city.
And now, by holding counſil with weak fear,
You magnify the foe, and turn our men
To flight: thus are we ruin'd by ourſelves.
This ever will ariſe from ſuffering women
To intermix with men. But mark me well,
Whoe'er henceforth dares diſobey my orders,
Be it or man or woman, old or young,
Vengeance ſhall burſt upon him, the decree
Stands irreverſible, and he ſhall die.
War is no female province, but the ſcene
For men: hence, home; nor ſpread your miſchiefs here.
Hear you, or not? Or ſpeak I to the deaf?

CHORUS.

Dear to thy country, ſon of Œdipus,
My ſoul was ſeiz'd with terror, when I heard
The rapid car roll on, its whirling wheels
Grating harſh thunder; and the iron curb
Inceſſant claſhing on the barbed ſteed.

ETEOCLES.

What! ſhou'd the pilot, when the lab'ring bark

Scarce

Scarce rides the ſwelling ſurge, forſake the helm,
And ſeek his ſafety from the ſculptur'd prow?

CHORUS.

Yet therefore to theſe antient images,
Confiding in their ſacred pow'r, I ran,
When at the gates ſharp ſleet of arrowy ſhow'r
Drove hard; my fears impell'd me to implore
The bleſt Gods to protect the city's ſtrength.

ETEOCLES.

Pray that our tow'rs repell the hoſtile ſpear.

CHORUS.

This ſhall the Gods—

ETEOCLES.

The Gods, they ſay, prepare
T' abandon us, and quit the vanquiſh'd town.

CHORUS.

Ah, never, whilſt I breath the vital air,
May their bleſt train forſake us; nor theſe eyes
Behold deſtruction raging thro' our ſtreets,
And in fierce flames our ſtately ſtructures blaze!

ETEOCLES.

Let not theſe invocations of the Gods

Make

Make you improvident; remember rather
Obedience is the mother of ſucceſs,
Wedded to ſafety: ſo the wiſe aſſure us.

CHORUS.

Yet in the Gods is a ſuperior pow'r,
Which often in afflictions clears away
Th' impenetrable cloud, whoſe ſullen gloom
Sharp miſery hung before our darken'd eyes.

ETEOCLES.

The victim, and the hallow'd ſacrifice,
When the foes menace, are the taſk of men;
Thine, to be ſilent, and remain at home.

CHORUS.

That we poſſeſs our city yet unconquer'd,
That yet our tow'rs repell th' aſſailing foe,
Is from the Gods: from them our voice calls down
Further ſucceſs: Why ſhou'd this move thy anger?

ETEOCLES.

It does not, virgin: No: your pious vows
I blame not. But be ſilent; leſt thy fears,
Swelling to this exceſs, diſmay our youth.

CHORUS.

Affrighted at the ſudden din of war,
And trembling with my fears, with haſty foot
I ſought this citadel, this ſacred ſeat.

ETEOCLES.

If haply now your eyes behold the dead,
Or wounded; burſt not forth in loud laments:
For blood and carnage is the food of war.

CHORUS.

Diſtinct I hear the firey-neighing ſteed.

ETEOCLES.

Whate'er thou hear'ſt, it aſks not thy attention.

CHORUS.

The city ſhakes beneath th' encloſing foes.

ETEOCLES.

Be ſatisfied; to guard it is my charge.

CHORUS.

I fear: the claſh is louder at the gates.

ETEOCLES.

Peace; nor diſtract the city with thy cries.

CHORUS.

Ye ſocial pow'rs, leave not our walls defenceleſs.

ETEOCLES.

ETEOCLES.

Woe on thee! Canſt thou not bear this in ſilence?

CHORUS.

Gods of this ſtate, ſave me from ſlavery!

ETEOCLES.

Me wou'dſt thou make a ſlave, and all the ſtate.

CHORUS.

All-pow'rfull Jove, turn on the foe the ſword!

ETEOCLES.

Heav'ns, of what quality are women form'd?

CHORUS.

Wretched, as men are, in their country's ruin.

ETEOCLES.

Still wail thy country? Still embrace theſe Gods?

CHORUS.

Wild with my fears, I ſpeak I know not what.

ETEOCLES.

Wou'dſt thou indulge me in a light requeſt?

CHORUS.

Speak it at once, quickly ſhall I obey.

ETEOCLES.

Be ſilent, wretch; nor terrify thy friends.

CHORUS.

I will; and with them bear what Fate decrees.

ETEOCLES.

I praiſe thy reſolution. Claſp no more
Theſe images; but ſtand apart, and aſk
Happier events; entreat the friendly Gods
To aid us. Hear my vows; then inſtant raiſe
The heav'n-appeaſing Pæan, whoſe high ſtrains
Of ſolemn import, 'midſt her ſacred rites,
Greece pours ſymphonious; ſtrains, that raiſe the ſoul
To gen'rous courage, and the fix'd diſdain
Of fear and danger. To the guardian Gods
Whoſe tutelary pow'r protects our fields,
Protects our crouded ſtreets; to Dirce's fount;
Nor thee, Iſmenus, will I paſs unhonour'd;
If conqueſt crowns our helms, and ſaves our city,
The hallow'd ſacrifice ſhall bleed, and load
Their ſmoaking altars; this victorious hand
Shall raiſe the glitt'ring trophies, and hang high,
To grace their ſacred walls, the rich-wrought veſts,
Spoils of the war, rent from the bleeding foe.
Breath to the Gods theſe vows: but let no ſigh

Break

Break forth, no lamentation rude and vain:
Weak is their pow'r to ſave thee from thy fate.
My charge ſhall be at our ſev'n gates to fix
Six of our braveſt youth, myſelf the ſeventh,
In dreadfull oppoſition to the foe;
E'er yet the violent and tumultuous cry
Calls me perforce to join the firey conflict.

CHORUS.

I. 1.

I wou'd obey thee; but my breaſt
Yet pants with fear, and knows not reſt:
Too near my heart diſtracting care
Wakes all the horrors of deſpair:
And as the trembling dove, whoſe fears
Keep watch in her uneaſy bow'r,
Thinks in each ruſtling leaf ſhe hears
The ſerpent gliding to devour,
I tremble at each ſullen ſound
Of claſhing arms, that roars around:
With all their troops, with all their pow'rs,
Fierce they advance to ſtorm our tow'rs;

Now

Now hurtling in the darken'd ſky,
What does my cruel fate prepare!
Rude, batt'ring ſtones inceſſant fly,
And all the miſſive ſtorm of war.

I. 2.

Guard, ye great Gods, O guard our wall,
Nor let the tow'rs of Cadmus fall!
Ah, to what fairer, richer plain
Your radiant preſence will you deign,
Theſe fields abandon'd to the foes,
Thro' whoſe criſp'd ſhades and ſmiling meads,
Jocundly warbling as ſhe goes,
Dirce her liquid treaſures leads,
And boaſts that Tethys never gave,
Nor all her nymphs, a purer wave!
Deign then, ye Gods that guard this land,
Here deign to take your hallow'd ſtand:
Aſſert your glory: on the foe
Pour rout, and havoc, and diſmay,
Confuſion wild, ſoul-with'ring woe,
And flight, that flings his arms away.

I. 3.

I. 3.

Hear then the mournfull, ſolemn ſtrain:
For dreadfull were its fate, ſhou'd this ſtrong wall,
This antient, rampir'd city, fall,
And ſpread its light duſt o'er th' encumber'd plain,
Beneath the proud Achaian ſpear,
Diſhonour'd, ſunk, the waſte of war.
Shou'd the freſh virgin's bloom, the matron's age,
By the fierce victor's firey rage,
Their robes all rent, their bleeding boſoms bare,
Be drag'd by their looſe-flowing hair,
Like horſes, a reluctant prize;
The deſolated ſtreets re-echoing to their cries.

II. 1.

Before my ſad preſaging ſoul
What ſcenes of imag'd horror roll!
I ſee the tender virgin's woe,
E'er yet her ripen'd beauties glow;
The hatefull way I ſee her tread,
Forcibly torn from her ſweet home:
Happier, far happier are the dead;
They reſt within the ſilent tomb.

But,

But, the walls humbled to the ground,
What dreadfull mis'ries rage around!
Furious one leads the vengefull bands;
One ſtains with blood his reeking hands;
Wide roll, outrageous to deſtroy,
The duſky ſmoke, and torrent fires;
Whilſt ſlaught'ring Mars with hideous joy
The heav'n-contemning rage inſpires.

II. 2.

From houſe to houſe, from ſtreet to ſtreet,
The craſhing flames roar round, and meet;
Each way the firey deluge preys,
And girds us with the circling blaze.
The brave, that 'midſt theſe dire alarms
For their loſt country greatly dare,
And fir'd with vengeance ruſh to arms,
Fall victims to the blood-ſtain'd ſpear.
The bleeding babe, with innocent cries,
Drops from his mother's breaſt, and dies.
See rapine ruſhes, bent on prey,
His haſty ſtep brooks no delay.

The ſpoiler, loaded with his ſtore,
Envious the loaded ſpoiler views;
Diſdains another ſhou'd have more,
And his inſatiate toil renews.

II. 3.

Thick on the earth the rich ſpoil lies:
For the rude plunderers' reſtleſs-rolling tide,
Their worthleſs numbers waving wide,
Drop in their wild haſte many' a glitt'ring prize.
Whilſt, in her chaſt apartment bred,
The trembling virgin captive led,
Pours, in the anguiſh of her ſoul, the tear:
And, torn from all her heart holds dear,
The youthfull bride, a novice yet in woe,
Obeys the haughty, happy foe.
But e'er ſuch horrors blaſt my ſight,
May theſe ſad eyes cloſe in eternal night!

SEMICHORUS.

See, from his watch the veteran returns,
Bearing, I ween, freſh tidings from yon' hoſt,
Of higheſt import: quick his foot, and haſty.

SEMICHORUS.

This way, behold, the ſon of Œdipus,
The king himſelf advances, preſſing on
His hurried ſtep to learn their new-form'd meaſures.

ETEOCLES, SOLDIER, CHORUS.

SOLDIER.

Now I can tell thee, for I know it well,
The diſpoſition of the foe, and how
Each at our gates takes his allotted poſt.
Already near the Prætian gate in arms
Stands Tydeus raging; for the prophet's voice
Forbids his foot to paſs Iſmenus' ſtream,
The victims not propitious: at the paſs
Furious, and eager for the fight, the chief,
Fierce as the dragon when the mid-day ſun
Calls forth his glowing terrors, raves aloud,
Reviles the ſage, as forming tim'rous league
With war and fate. Frowning he ſpeaks, and ſhakes
The dark creſt ſtreaming o'er his ſhaded helm
In triple wave; whilſt dreadfull ring around
The brazen boſſes of his ſhield, impreſs'd

With

With this proud argument. A ſable ſky
Burning with ſtars; and in the midſt full-orb'd
A ſilver moon, the eye of night, o'er all
Awefull in beauty pours her peerleſs light.
Clad in theſe proud habiliments, he ſtands
Cloſe to the river's margin, and with ſhouts
Demands the war, like an impatient ſteed,
That pants upon the foaming curb, and waits
With firey expectation the known ſignal,
Swift at the trumpet's ſound to burſt away.
Before the Prætian gate, its bars remov'd,
What equal chief wilt thou appoint againſt him?

ETEOCLES.

This military pride, it moves not me:
The gorgeous blazonry of arms, the creſt
High waving o'er the helm, the roaring boſs,
Harmleſs without the ſpear, imprint no wound.
The ſable night, ſpangled with golden ſtars,
On his proud ſhield impreſs'd, perchance may prove
A gloomy preſage. Shou'd the ſhades of night
Fall on his dying eyes, the boaſtfull charge
May to the bearer be deem'd ominous,

And he the prophet of his own deſtruction.
Againſt his rage the ſon of Aſtacus,
That breathes deliberate valour, at that gate
Will I appoint commander; bent on deeds
Of glory, but a votary at the ſhrine
Of modeſty, he ſcorns the arrogant vaunt
As baſe, but bids brave actions ſpeak his worth.
The flow'r of that bold ſtem, which from the ground
Roſe arm'd, and fell not in the deathfull fight,
Is Menalippus; him his parent earth
Claims as her own, and in her natural right
Calls him to guard her from the hoſtile ſpear:
But the brave deed the die of war decides.

CHORUS.

Go then, my guardian hero, go;
And may each fav'ring God with bright ſucceſs
Thy gen'rous valour bleſs:
For at thy country's dear command
Thou arm'ſt thy righteous hand,
To pour her vengeance on the foe.

Yet

Yet my ſad heart muſt ſigh,
When on the blood-empurpled ground,
Gored with many a gaping wound,
I ſee my deareſt friends expiring lie.

SOLDIER.

May the Gods crown his valiant toil with conqueſt.
But Capaneus againſt th' Electran gates
Takes his allotted poſt, and tow'ring ſtands
Vaſt as the earth-born giants, and inflam'd
To more than mortal daring: horribly
He menaces the walls; may Heav'n avert
His impious rage! vaunts that, the Gods aſſenting
Or not aſſenting, his ſtrong hand ſhall rend
Their rampires down; that e'en the rage of Jove
Deſcending on the field ſhou'd not reſtrain him.
His lightnings, and his thunders wing'd with fire
He likens to the ſun's meridian heat.
On his proud ſhield pourtray'd A naked man
Waves in his hand a blazing torch; beneath
In golden letters, I WILL FIRE THE CITY.
Againſt this man—But who ſhall dare t' engage
His might, and dauntleſs his proud rage ſuſtain?

ETEOCLES.

ETEOCLES.

Advantage from advantage here ariſes.
The arrogant vaunts, which man's vain tongue throws out,
Shall on himſelf recoil. This haughty chief
Threats high, and prompt to execute his threats
Spurns at the Gods, opes his unhallow'd lips
In ſhallow exultations, hurls on high,
Weak mortal as he is, 'gainſt Jove himſelf
Hurls his extravagant and wild defiance.
On him, I truſt, the thunder wing'd with fire,
Far other than the ſun's meridian heat,
Shall roll its vengeance. But againſt his pride,
Inſolent vaunter, ſhall the glowing ſpirit,
That burns for glory in the daring breaſt
Of Polyphontes, be oppos'd: his arm,
Strong in Diana's tutelary aid,
Shall be a ſure defence. But to thy tale;
Who next before our gates aſſumes his ſtation?

CHORUS.

Yes, let him periſh, the proud foe,
That ſtorms, in ſavage hope, the vanquiſh'd town,
And rends its rampires down.

Him

Him firſt may Heav'n's almighty fire,
Rolling his vengefull fire,
Daſh in the flaming ruin low;
E'er his impetuous ſpear
Burſts ev'ry bar of my retreat,
And from my virgin ſeat
Drags me perforce from all my ſoul holds dear.

SOLDIER.

Third from the brazen helm leap'd forth the lot
Of fierce Eteoclus, who takes his poſt
Againſt the gates of Neis: there he whirls
His firey-neighing ſteeds, that toſs their heads
Proud of their nodding plumes, eager to ruſh
Againſt the gates, and ſnorting champ their curbs
Boſs'd with barbaric pride. No mean device
Is ſculptur'd on his ſhield, A man in arms,
His ladder fix'd againſt the enemies' walls,
Mounts, reſolute to rend their rampires down;
And cries aloud, the letters plainly mark'd,
NOT MARS HIMSELF SHALL BEAT ME FROM THE TOW'RS.
Appoint of equal hardihood ſome chief
To guard the city from the ſervile yoke.

ETEOCLES.

ETEOCLES.

Such ſhall I ſend, to conqueſt ſend him; one
That bears not in his hand this pageantry
Of martial pride. The hardy Megareus,
From Creon ſprung, and that bold race, which roſe
Embattled from the earth: him from the gates
The furious neighings of the firey ſteeds
Affright not; but his blood ſpilt on the earth
Amply requites the nouriture ſhe gave him,
Or captive both, the man in arms, the town
Storm'd on the ſculptur'd ſhield, and the proud bearer,
Shall with their ſpoils adorn his father's houſe.

CHORUS.

Go then, and glory be thy guide!
For thee, brave youth, we pour this ardent pray'r,
And fav'ring Heav'n ſhall hear.
Go then, my houſe's guardian, go,
And ruſhing on the foe,
Bravely repell their vaunting pride.
And as each furious ſoul
Hurls the ferocious menace high,
May he, that rules the ſky,
In vengeance his indignant eye-balls roll!

SOLDIER,

SOLDIER.

At the next gate, nam'd from the martial Goddeſs
Onca Minerva, ſtands Hippomedon.
I heard his thund'ring voice, I ſaw his form
In bulk and ſtature proudly eminent;
I ſaw him roll his ſhield, large, maſſy, round,
Of broad circumference: it ſtruck my ſoul
With terror. On its orb no vulgar artiſt
Expreſs'd this image, A Typhæus huge,
Diſgorging from his foul enfoulder'd jaws,
In fierce effuſion, wreaths of duſky ſmoke,
Signal of kindling flames: its bending verge
With folds of twiſted ſerpents border'd round.
With ſhouts the giant-chief provokes the war;
And in the ravings of outrageous valour
Glares terror from his eyes. Behoves thee then
Strong oppoſition to his firey rage,
Which at the gates e'en now ſpreads wild diſmay.

ETEOCLES.

Firſt, Onca Pallas, holding near the gates
Her hallow'd ſtate, abhors his furious rage;
And in her guardian care ſhall cruſh the pride

Of this fell dragon. Then the ſon of Ænops,
Hyperbius, of approv'd and ſteady valour,
Shall man to man oppoſe him; one that dares
Aſſay his fate in the rough ſhock of battle;
In form, in ſpirit, and in martial arms
Conſummate; ſuch high grace Hermes confer'd.
In hoſtile arms thus man ſhall combat man,
And to the battle on their ſculptur'd ſhields
Bring adverſe Gods; the fierce Typhæus he,
Breathing forth flakes of fire; Hyperbius bears
The majeſty of Jove ſecurely thron'd,
Graſping his flaming bolt: and who e'er ſaw
The Thund'rer vanquiſh'd? In the fellowſhip
Of friendly Gods, the conquerors are with us,
They with the conquer'd; and with like event
Theſe warriors ſhall engage; as Jove in fight
Subdued the fell Typhæus, ſo his form
Emblazon'd on the ſhield ſhall guard Hyperbius.

CHORUS.

If ought of truth my ſoul inſpires,
This chief, that tow'ring o'er th' affrighted field
Bears on his ſculptur'd ſhield

Th' enormous

Th' enormous monſter, buried deep
Beneath a mountainous heap,
Rolling in vain his turbid fires,
Monſter accurs'd, abhor'd
By Gods above, by men below;
This chief his head ſhall bow
Low at the gate beneath the victor's ſword.

SOLDIER.

Prophetic be thy hopes. At the north gate,
Yet hear me, king, the fifth bold warrior takes
His ſtation, near the tomb where honour'd lies
Jove-born Amphion: By his ſpear he ſwears,
Which, as he graſps, he dares to venerate
More than a God, and dearer to his eyes
Than the ſweet light of Heav'n: by this he ſwears
To level with the ground the walls of Thebes,
Tho' Jove himſelf oppoſe him. Thus exclaims
This beauteous branch ſprung from a mountain nymph,
Blooming in manly youth; the tender down
Of unripe age ſcarce ſprouting on his cheek;
But ruthleſs are his thoughts, cruel his eye,
And proudly vaunting at the gate he takes

His terrible ſtand. Upon his claſhing ſhield,
Whoſe orb ſuſtains the ſtorm of war, he bears
The foul diſgrace of Thebes, a rav'nous ſphynx,
Fix'd to the plates; the burniſh'd monſter round
Pours a portentous gleam: beneath her lies
A Theban, mangled by her cruel fangs.
'Gainſt this let each brave arm direct the ſpear.
No hireling he, to proſtitute for gold
The war, or ſhame the length of way he trod,
E'en from Arcadia: ſuch this ſtranger comes,
Parthenopœus, and repays to Argos
Its hoſpitable honours, 'gainſt theſe tow'rs
Breathing proud menaces. The Gods avert them!

ETEOCLES.

That ruin, which their fierce aſpiring thoughts
With impious vaunts intend, may the juſt Gods
Turn on themſelves, total defeat, and ſhame;
So let them periſh! To this proud Arcadian
No boaſter we oppoſe; but one whoſe hand
Knows its rough work, Actor, the valiant brother
Of him laſt named. Never will he permit
The tongue, without th' aſſay of warlike deeds,

To

To ruſh within the gates, and execute
Its ruinous threats; nor him, whoſe hoſtile ſhield
Bears ſculptur'd that abhor'd and rav'ning beaſt:
And many' a thund'ring ſtroke with ſtern rebuke
Shall check her proud advances to the walls.
Soon ſhall the fav'ring Gods confirm theſe hopes.

CHORUS.

Theſe words appall my throbbing breaſt:
And the light tangles of my braided hair
Riſe upright with my fear,
As from the impious foes around
Theſe dreadfull voices ſound,
Furious with thund'ring threats expreſt.
Ye pow'rs, that rule on high,
Scatter their dreaded forces wide,
Or let their creſted pride
Low in the duſt beneath our rampires lie!

SOLDIER.

The ſixth brave chief, that with the golden curb
Of prudence knows to check his gen'rous valour,
The fate-foretelling ſeer, Amphiaraus,
At th' Omolæan gate his deſtin'd poſt

Aſſumes

Aſſumes in arms, and on the firey Tydeus
Throws many' a keen reproach, reviles him as
An homicide, the troubler of the ſtate,
The mighty author of all ill to Argos,
With murder and the furies at his heels
Urging Adraſtus to theſe hatefull deeds.
Thy brother Polynices, with him leagued
In theſe deſpitefull deeds, he blames aloud,
Deſcants upon his name, and thus rebukes him,
How gratefull to the Gods muſt this deed be,
Glorious to hear, and in the roll of fame
Shining to diſtant ages, thus to lead
Theſe foreign arms to waſte thy bleeding country,
To raze thoſe princely manſions, where thy fathers,
Heroes and demigods, once held their ſeats!
But ſay thy cauſe be juſt, will juſtice dry
Thy mother's tears? And when the furious ſpear,
Hurl'd by thy hand, ſhall pierce thy country's boſom,
Will ſhe with friendly arms again receive thee?
Præſcient of fate I ſhall enrich this ſoil,
Sunk in the hoſtile plain. But let us fight.
One thing at leaſt is mine: I will not find

A vulgar

A vulgar, or diſhonorable death.
So ſpoke the prophet; and with awefull port
Advanc'd his maſſy ſhield, the ſhining orb
Bearing no impreſs; for his gen'rous ſoul
Wiſhes to be, not to appear, the beſt;
And from the culture of his modeſt worth
Bears the rich fruit of great and glorious deeds.
Him let the virtuous and the wiſe oppoſe;
For dreadfull is the foe that fears the Gods.

ETEOCLES.

I mourn the deſtiny, that blends the juſt
With theſe unhallow'd wretches. Nothing worſe
In whate'er cauſe, than impious fellowſhip;
Nothing of good is reap'd; for when the field
Is ſown with wrong, the ripen'd fruit is death.
If with a deſperate band, whoſe hearts are hot
With villany, the pious hoiſts his ſails,
The vengeance of the Gods burſts on the bark
And ſinks him with the heav'n-deteſted crew.
If 'midſt a race, inhoſpitably bent
On ſavage deeds, regardleſs of the Gods,
The juſt man fix his ſeat, th' impending wrath

Spares

Spares not, but ſtrikes him with vindictive fury,
Cruſh'd in the general ruin. So this ſeer,
Of temper'd wiſdom, of unſullied honour,
Juſt, good, and pious, and a mighty prophet,
In deſpite to his better judgement join'd
With men of impious daring, bent to tread
The long, irremeable way, with them
Shall, if high Jove aſſiſt us, be drag'd down
To joint perdition. Ne'er ſhall he advance
Againſt our gates, with-held not by baſe fear,
Or cowardice of ſoul; but that he knows
His fate, if Phœbus ought of truth foretells,
To fall in fight: he loves then to be ſilent,
Since what the time demands he cannot ſpeak.
Yet him againſt the ſtrength of Laſthenes,
Who from the ſtranger's inroad guards our gates,
Shall I oppoſe: in manhood's vig'rous prime
He bears the providence of age; his eye
Quick as the lightning's glance; before his ſhield
Flames his protended ſpear, and longs t' obey
His hand. But victory is the gift of Heav'n.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

That gift, ye great immortal pow'rs,
On the brave guardians of our ſtate beſtow;
On each victorious brow
The radiant honour bind! Oh, hear
A virgin's pious pray'r;
Chaſe the proud ſtrangers from our tow'rs;
Or headlong let them fall,
Thy red right hand, almighty fire,
Rolling its vengefull fire,
In flaming ruin ſtretch'd beneath our wall!

SOLDIER.

The ſeven bold chief——Forgive me that I name
Thy brother, and relate the horrible vows,
The imprecations, which his rage pours forth
Againſt the city; on fire to mount the walls,
And from their turrets to this land proclaim,
Rending its echoes with the ſong of war,
Captivity: to meet thee ſword to ſword,
Kill thee, then die upon thee: if thou liveſt,
T' avenge on thee his exile and diſgrace
With the like treatment. Thund'ring vengeance thus

The rage of Polynices calls the Gods,
Preſiding o'er his country, to look down,
And aid his vows. His well-orb'd ſhield he holds,
New-wrought, and with a double impreſs charg'd:
A warrior, blazing all in golden arms,
A female form of modeſt aſpect leads,
Expreſſing juſtice, as th' inſcription ſpeaks,
YET ONCE MORE TO HIS COUNTRY, AND ONCE MORE
TO HIS PATERNAL THRONE I WILL RESTORE HIM.
Such their devices. But th' important taſk,
Whom to oppoſe againſt his force, is thine.
Let not my words offend: I but relate,
Do thou command; for thou art ſovereign her[illegible]

ETEOCLES.

How dreadfull is the hatred of the Gods!
Unhappy ſons of Œdipus, your fate
Claims many' a tear. Ah me! my father's curſe
Now ſtamps its vengeance deep. But to lament,
Or ſigh, or ſhed the tear, becomes me not,
Leſt more intolerable grief ariſe.
Be Polynices told, ill-omen'd name,
Soon ſhall we ſee how far his blazon'd ſhield

Avails;

Avails; how far inſcriptions wrought in gold,
With all their futile vauntings, will reſtore him.
If juſtice, virgin daughter of high Jove,
Had ever form'd his mind, or rul'd his actions,
This might have been: but neither when his eyes
Firſt ſaw the light of life; nor in the growth
Of infancy; nor in th' advancing years
Of youth; nor in the riper age; that clothes
With gradual down the manly cheek, did juſtice
E'er deign t' inſtruct, or mark him for her own.
Nor now, I ween, in this his fell intent
To cruſh his country will her preſence aid him:
For juſtice were not juſtice, ſhou'd ſhe favour
Th' injurious outrage of his daring ſpirit.
In this confiding I will meet his arms
In armed oppoſition: Who more fit?
Chief ſhall engage with chief, with brother brother,
And foe with foe. Haſte, arm me for the fight,
Bring forth my greaves, my hauberk, my ſtrong ſpear.

CHORUS.

Dear to thy country, ſon of Œdipus,
Be not thy rage like his, whom we abhor.

Thebes has no dearth of valiant ſons t' oppoſe
Theſe Argives; and their blood may be aton'd;
The death of brothers by each other ſlain,
That ſtain no expiation can atone.

ETEOCLES.

Cou'd man endure defeat without diſhonour,
'Twere well: but to the dead nothing remains,
Save glory: to the daſtard, and the baſe,
Fame never pays that honorable meed.

CHORUS.

Ah, whither doſt thou ruſh? Let not revenge,
That wildly raving ſhakes the furious ſpear,
Tranſport thee thus. Check this hot tide of paſſion.

ETEOCLES.

No: ſince the God impells me, I will on.
And let the race of Laius, let them all,
Abhor'd by Phœbus, in this ſtorm of fate
Sink down to deep Cocytus' dreary flood.

CHORUS.

Cruel and murd'rous is the rage that fires thee
To deeds of death, to unpermitted blood;
And ſorrow is the bitter fruit it yields.

ETEOCLES.

My father's curſe, a ſtern relentleſs fury,
Rolling her tearleſs eyes, looks on and tells me
Glory purſues her prize, diſdaining fate.

CHORUS.

Ah, rave not thus: Fame will not call thee baſe
Or cowardly, if well thy life be order'd.
The gloomy fury enters not his houſe,
Whoſe hands preſent th' accepted ſacrifice.

ETEOCLES.

The Gods accept not us; and on our fall
Glory attends admiring: Why then ſue
For grace, with ſervile fear cringing to death?

CHORUS.

For that it is at hand: its terrible pow'r
Sooth'd by th' abatement of this firey valour,
May come perchance more gentle; now it rages.

ETEOCLES.

My father's imprecations rage, and haunt
My ſleep: too true the real viſions riſe,
And wave the bloody ſword that parts his kingdoms.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Let us perſuade thee, tho' thou ſcorn'ſt our ſex.

ETEOCLES.

What wou'd thy wiſh have done? Speak it in brief.

CHORUS.

Ah, go not this way: go not to this gate.

ETEOCLES.

My ſoul's on fire; nor ſhall thy words retard me.

CHORUS.

Conqueſt, that ſpurns at right, offends the Gods.

ETEOCLES.

Ill ſuit theſe tame words the arm'd warrior's ear.

CHORUS.

And canſt thou wiſh to ſpill thy brother's blood?

ETEOCLES.

By the juſt Gods he ſhall not 'ſcape my vengeance.

CHORUS.

She comes, the fierce tremendous pow'r,
And harrows up my ſoul with dread;
No gentle Goddeſs, prompt to ſhow'r
Her bleſſings on ſome favour'd head.

I know

I know her now, the propheteſs of ill,
And vengeance ratifies each word,
The votive fury, fiend abhor'd;
The father's curſes to fullfill
Dreadfull ſhe comes, and with her brings
The brood of fate, that laps the blood of kings.

The rude barbarian, from the mines
Of Scythia, o'er the lots preſides;
Ruthleſs to each his ſhare aſſigns,
And the conteſted realm divides:
To each allots no wider a domain
Than, on the cold earth as they lie,
Their breathleſs bodies occupy,
Regardleſs of an ampler reign.
Such narrow compaſs does the ſword,
A cruel umpire, their high claims afford.

Conflicting thus in furious mood,
Shou'd each by other's hand be ſlain;
Shou'd the black fountain of their blood
Spout forth, and drench the thirſty plain;

Who

Who ſhall the ſolemn expiation pay?
Who with pure lavers cleanſe the dead?
Miſeries to miſeries thus ſucceed,
And vengeance marks this houſe her prey,
Swift to chaſtiſe the firſt ill deed;
And the ſon's ſons in her deep fury bleed.

The firſt ill deed from Laius ſprung:
Thrice from his ſhrine theſe words of fate
Awefull the Pythian Phœbus ſung,
" Die childleſs, wou'dſt thou ſave the ſtate."
Urg'd by his friends, as round the free wine flows,
To Love's forbidden rites he flies.
By the ſon's hand the father dies.
He in the chaſt ground, whence he roſe,
Was bold t' implant the deadly root;
And madneſs rear'd each balefull-ſpreading ſhoot.

Wide o'er misfortune's ſurging tide
Billows ſucceeding billows ſpread;
Shou'd one, its fury ſpent, ſubſide,
Another lifts its boiſt'rous head,

And

And foams around the city's ſhatter'd prow.
But ſhou'd the rough tempeſtuous wave
Force thro' our walls too ſlight to ſave,
And lay the thin partition low,
Will not the flood's reſiſtleſs ſway
Sweep kings and people, town and realms away?

The dreadfull curſe pronounc'd of old
To vengeance rouſes ruthleſs hate;
And ſlaughter, ranging uncontrol'd,
Purſues the hideous work of fate.
Wreck'd in the ſtorm the great, the brave, the wiſe
Are ſunk beneath the roaring tide.
Such was the chief, this city's pride,
Dear to each God in yon' bright ſkies,
Whoſe prudence took our dread away,
The rav'ning monſter gorg'd with human prey.

Where now the chief? His glories where?
Fall'n, fall'n. From the polluted bed
Indignant madneſs, wild deſpair,
And agonizing grief ſucceed.

The light of Heav'n, himſelf, his ſons abhor'd,
Darkling he feeds his gloomy rage,
Bids them, with many' a curſe, engage,
And part their empire with the ſword.
That curſe now holds its unmov'd ſtate,
The furious fiend charg'd with the work of fate.

SOLDIER, CHORUS.

SOLDIER.

Have comfort, virgins, your fond parents' joy;
The city hath eſcap'd the ſervile yoke,
And the proud vaunts of theſe impetuous men
Are fall'n: the ſtorm is ceas'd, and the rough waves,
That threaten'd to o'erwhelm us, are ſubſided.
Our tow'rs ſtand firm, each well-appointed chief
Guarded his charge with manly fortitude.
All at ſix gates is well: but at the ſeventh
The God, to whom that myſtic number's ſacred,
Royal Apollo, took his awefull ſtand,
Repaying on the race of Œdipus
The ill-advis'd tranſgreſſion of old Laius.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

What new affliction hath befall'n the city?

SOLDIER.

The city is preſerv'd: the brother kings
Are fall'n, each ſlaughter'd by the other's hand.

CHORUS.

Who? What? Thy words diſtract my ſenſe with fear.

SOLDIER.

Be calm, and hear. The ſons of Œdipus.

CHORUS.

Ah me! I am the propheteſs of ill.

SOLDIER.

It is indeed too certain: both are dead.

CHORUS.

Came they to this? 'Tis horrible; yet tell me.

SOLDIER.

Brother by brother's hands dreadfully ſlain.

CHORUS.

And has one common fate involv'd them both?

SOLDIER.

It has indeed deſtroy'd th' unhappy race.
Here then is cauſe for lamentation, cauſe

For joy: joy, that the city ſtands ſecure;
But lamentation, that the chiefs are fall'n.
To both the rigid ſteel, forg'd in the mines
Of Scythia, ſhares their whole inheritance;
And each receives but that ſmall tract of earth,
Which ſerves him for a tomb; their father's curſe,
Fatally cruel, ſweeps them both away.
The city is preſerv'd; but the duſt drinks
The blood of the' brothers, each by th' other ſlain.

CHORUS.

MONOSTROPHE.

O Jove ſupreme,
And all ye Gods that guard this ſtate,
Shou'd I the joyfull Pæan raiſe,
And celebrate your praiſe?
Your guardian care, propitious pow'rs,
Preſerv'd our walls, preſerv'd our tow'rs!
Or bid the ſolemn, dolefull ſtrain
Lament the chiefs, the brothers ſlain;
A mournfull theme;

Thro'

Thro' mad ambition's impious pride,
Childleſs, unbleſs'd, in youth's warm tide
Fall'n, fall'n by too ſevere a fate?

STROPHE.

Thou gloomy curſe, too prompt to ill,
A father's vengeance to fullfill,
I feel, I feel thee in my ſhiv'ring breaſt!
Soon as I hēard th' unhappy ſlain
Lay welt'ring on th' enſanguin'd plain,
With inſpiration's raging pow'r poſſeſt,
I form'd the funeral ſtrains to flow
With all the melody of woe.

ANTISTROPHE.

Thou fell, ill-omen'd, cruel ſpear,
Cou'dſt thou the father's curſes hear,
And wing'd with fury drink the brother's gore?
Now, Laius, boaſt the frentic deed:
Thy diſobedience has its meed;
The fatal oracle delays no more.
Theſe are your works; and round them ſtand
Horrors, and death's avenging band.

EPODE.

EPODE.

Is this a tale of fear-created woe?
In very deed before our eyes
A twofold ſcene of miſery lies,
And from a double ſlaughter double horrors flow;
Whilſt grief on grief, and groan on groan
Ruſh in, and make this houſe their own.
Come then, ye virgins, form the mournfull bands,
To wail the mighty ſlain;
And ever and anon, at each ſad pauſe
The dying cadence draws,
Together ſmite your high-rais'd hands,
The ſullen ſound attemper'd to the ſtrain,
That with many' a diſmal note
Accompanies the ſable boat,
Slow as its ſails on Acheron's dull ſtream,
Wafting its joyleſs numbers o'er
To that unlovely, dreary ſhore,
Which Phœbus never views, nor the light's golden beam.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

But ſee, to aid this mournfull office come

Antigone

Antigone and Iſmene: they beſure
Will, from their lovely gentleneſs of ſoul,
Pour for their brothers' loſs their ſorrows wild.
Behoves us then, e'er the ſad tale ſhall reach
Their ear, with meet ſolemnity to raiſe
The thrilling ſtrain, and chaunt the hymn of death.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Unhappy in your brothers, moſt unhappy
Of all, that o'er their ſwelling boſoms bind
The decent veſt, I weep, I breath the ſigh
Warm from my heart, that feels for your afflictions.

ANTIGONE, ISMENE, CHORUS.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Ah, what frentic rage poſſeſt
Each unyielding, ruthleſs breaſt,
Wiſdom ſcorn'd, and friends defy'd,
By threat'ning ills unterrify'd,
'Gainſt their father's houſe to bear,
Wretched they, the fatal ſpear!

2d SEMICHORUS.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Wretched they a wretched death
Found their houſe's fall beneath.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Each the ruin'd palace o'er
Strove t' extend his envied pow'r:
Each unrival'd and alone
Proudly ſtrove to ſeize the throne.
But the ſword their conteſt ends,
Not the lovely ſtriſe of friends.
Hate, that never knows remorſe,
Fury of the father's curſe,
Thro' their ſides with horrid ſway
Urg'd the ſharp ſteel's purple way.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Charg'd with death thou cruel curſe,
Each has felt thy fatal force.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Brother pierc'd by brother dies,
Low their houſe in ruin lies.

2d SEMICHORUS.

2d SEMICHORUS.

From the father's furious breath
Diſcord roſe, and rage, and death.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Grief with wild, diſtracted air
Thro' the city leads deſpair;
The tow'rs on high, the vales below,
Sigh the ſullen notes of woe.
To other lords the large domains,
And the envied pow'r remains;
Of the territories wide,
For which they fought, for which they died,
Each receives an equal ſhare,
Fiercely parted by the ſpear:
Cruel arbiter of fate,
Friends thy rude deciſions hate.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Pierc'd with ſteel each finds his end:
Pierc'd with ſteel they haſte t' attend
Their fathers, by like bloody death,
In the yawning grave beneath.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

Grief, that rends the tortur'd breaſt,
Deep with real woes poſſeſt,
Tears faſt ſtreaming from her eyes,
From the haunts of pleaſure flies,
Anguiſh, miſery all her own,
Sadly pours the hollow groan;
Whilſt the ruin'd palace round
Echo anſwers to the ſound;
And, each frightfull pauſe between,
From her airy ſhell unſeen,
Liſtens to the funeral ſtrain,
Wailing the unhappy ſlain;
Wailing all the dreadfull woes
That from madding diſcord roſe;
Many' a friend among the dead,
Whilſt the hoſtile legions bleed.

2d SEMICHORUS.

Far beyond each ſorrowing dame,
Each that bears a mother's name,
Each that groans upon the earth,
Hapleſs ſhe that gave them birth.

She,

She, to ſhare her bed and throne,
As an huſband took her ſon:
Theſe ſhe bore, and this their fate,
Brother ſlain by brother's hate.

ISMENE.

Brothers they, by birth allied,
Spread the mutual carnage wide:
Unfriendly each to other's life,
In the madding rage of ſtrife.
But their hatred is no more,
On the earth, all ſtain'd with gore,
Their ſtream of life unites, and ſhows
From one common ſource it roſe.

CHORUS.

Umpire of the ſtrife of kings,
Forth the barbarous ſtranger ſprings;
Ruthleſs iſſuing from the flame
O'er the ſeas the keen ſteel came.
Ruthleſs came the realm to ſhare,
Big with miſchief, waſting war,
And accurs'd, without remorſe,
Executes a father's curſe.

ANTIGONE.

They have the wretched ſhare they choſe,
Share of heav'n-appointed woes:
And the rich, conteſted prize
Deep beneath earth's boſom lies.

ISMENE.

It falls, the royal houſe, it falls;
Ruin lords it o'er its walls;
And the furies howl around,
Notes of ſhrill, ſoul-piercing ſound.
Slaughter, reeking yet with gore,
Raiſes high each gate before,
Where they fought, and where they bled,
Trophies of the mighty dead;
And, the rival chiefs ſubdued,
Ceaſes from her work of blood.

ANTIGONE.

Wounded thou gaveſt the fatal wound.

ISMENE.

Dying thy hand its vengeance found.

ANTIGONE.

By the ſpear 'twas thine to kill.

ISMENE.

And the ſpear's thy blood to ſpill.

ANTIGONE.

Fierce thy thought, and fell thy deed.

ISMENE.

Fierce recoil'd it on thy head.

ANTIGONE.

Flow my tears.

ISMENE.

My ſorrows flow.

ANTIGONE.

He, that ſlew, ſhall lie as low.

Madneſs mingles with my moans.

ISMENE.

Heaves my heart, and burſts with groans.

ANTIGONE.

Thou ſhalt claim the ceaſeleſs tear.

ISMENE.

To my ſoul waſt thou moſt dear.

ANTIGONE.

Thee thy friend ſtretch'd on the plain.

ISMENE.

ISMENE.

And by thee thy friend is ſlain.

ANTIGONE.

Twice to ſee.

ISMENE.

And twice to tell.

ANTIGONE.

Near us do theſe ſorrows dwell.

ISMENE.

Near us dwell theſe ſorrows, near
As to ſiſters brothers are.

ANTIGONE.

Fate, in all thy terrors clad,
Œdipus, thy awefull ſhade,
Erinnys, frowning black as night,
Dreadfull, dreadfull is your might!

ISMENE.

Fierce from flight atchiev'd he deeds,
At which my heart with anguiſh bleeds.

ANTIGONE.

Nor is he return'd that flew.

ISMENE.

Safe himſelf, on death he flew.

ANTIGONE.

Death upon himſelf he brought.

ISMENE.

And to him deſtruction wrought.

ANTIGONE.

Sprung from an unhappy line.

ISMENE.

In one unhappy fate they join.

ANTIGONE.

Mournfull, threefold miſery.

ISMENE.

Sad to tell.

ANTIGONE.

And ſad to ſee.

Fate in all thy terrors clad,
Œdipus, thy awefull ſhade,
Erinnys, frowning black as night,
Dreadfull, dreadfull is your might!
Thou their pow'r haſt paſt, haſt known.

ISMENE.

ISMENE.

Soon this knowledge was thy own.

ANTIGONE.

To the town advancing near.

ISMENE.

Lifting high thy purple ſpear,
Burning fierce with enmity.

ANTIGONE.

Sad to tell.

ISMENE.

And ſad to ſee.

ANTIGONE.

Ah, what woes on us await!

ISMENE.

And our houſe oppreſs'd with fate:
Thro' the land the evils ſpread,
Falling heavieſt on my head.

ANTIGONE.

I th' afflicting burden ſhare,
Equal ſorrow, equal care.

ISMENE.

Eteocles, from thee it flows,
Author of theſe mournfull woes.

ANTIGONE.

Each the guſhing tear demands.

ISMENE.

Each with frenzy arm'd his hands.

ANTIGONE.

Where ſhall we with pious care
The ſepulchral earth prepare?

ISMENE.

Where the hallow'd ground ſhall ſpread
Awefull honours o'er the dead.

ANTIGONE.

Their unhappy father nigh
Let the mournfull ruins lie.

ANTIGONE, ISMENE, CHORUS.

HERALD attending the bodies of ETEOCLES and POLYNICES.

HERALD.

My office leads me to proclaim the mandate

Of the great rulers of the Theban ſtate.
Eteocles, for that he lov'd his country,
They have decreed with honour to interr.
To ſhield her from her foes he fought, he fell,
Her ſacred rites rever'd, unſtain'd with blame,
Where glory calls the valiant youth to bleed,
He bled. Thus far of him am I bid ſay.
Of Polynices, that his corpſe ſhall lie
Caſt out unburied, to the dogs a prey;
Becauſe his ſpear, had not the Gods oppos'd,
Threaten'd deſtruction to the land of Thebes.
In death the vengeance of his country's Gods
Purſues him, for he ſcorn'd them, and preſum'd
To lead a foreign hoſt, and ſtorm the town.
Be this then his reward, to lie expos'd
To rav'nous birds, unhonour'd, of the rites
That grace the dead, libations at the tomb,
The ſolemn ſtrain, that 'midſt the exequies
Breaths from the friendly voice of woe, depriv'd.
Theſe are the mandates of the Theban rulers.

ANTIGONE.

And to theſe Theban rulers I declare,
If none beſides dare bury him, myſelf
Will do that office, heedleſs of the danger,
And think no ſhame to diſobey the ſtate,
Paying the laſt ſad duties to a brother.
Nature has tender ties, and ſtrongly joins
The offspring of the ſame unhappy mother,
And the ſame wretched father. In this taſk
Shrink not, my ſoul, to ſhare the ills he ſuffer'd,
Involuntary ills; and whilſt life warms
This breaſt, be bold to ſhow a ſiſter's love
To a dead brother. Shall the famiſh'd wolves
Fatten on him? Away with ſuch a thought.
I, tho' a woman, will prepare his tomb,
Dig up the earth, and bear it in this boſom,
In theſe fine folds to cover him. Go to.
I will not be oppos'd. Fruitfull invention
Shall deviſe means to execute the taſk.

HERALD.

I charge thee not t' offend the ſtate in this.

ANTIGONE.

I charge thee waſte not words on me in vain.

HERALD.

Rage ſoon inflames a people freed from danger.

ANTIGONE.

Inflame them thou, he ſhall not lie unburied.

HERALD.

Wilt thou thus grace the object of their hate?

ANTIGONE.

Long have they ſtrove to load him with diſhonour.

HERALD.

Not till he ſhook this land with hoſtile arms.

ANTIGONE.

Great were his wrongs, and greatly he reveng'd them.

HERALD.

Injur'd by one, his vengeance burſt on all.

ANTIGONE.

Vengeance, the meaneſt of the Gods, will do
What ſhe reſolves; ſpare then thy tedious ſpeech,
And be aſſur'd that I will bury him.

HERALD.

Self-will'd, and unadvis'd! I muſt declare this.

ANTIGONE.

ANTIGONE, ISMENE, CHORUS.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

With what a ruthleſs and deſtructive rage
The Furies hurl their vengefull ſhafts around,
And deſolate the houſe of Œdipus!
What then remains for me? and how reſolve?
Can I forbear to mourn thee, to attend thee
To the ſad tomb? Yet duty to the ſtate,
And reverence to its mandates, awes my ſoul.
Thou * ſhalt have many to lament thy fall:
Whilſt he †, unwept, unpitied, unattended,
Save by a ſiſter's ſolitary ſorrows,
Sinks to the ſhades. Approve you this reſolve?

2d SEMICHORUS.

To thoſe, that wail the fate of Polynices,
Let the ſtate act its pleaſure. We will go,
Attend his funeral rites, and aid his ſiſter
To place him in the earth. Such ſorrows move
The common feelings of humanity;
And, where the deed is juſt, the ſtate approves it.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

* Eteocles. † Polynices.

1ſt SEMICHORUS.

And we with him, as juſtice and the ſtate
Concur to call us. Next th' immortal Gods,
And Jove's high pow'r, this valiant youth came forth
The guardian of his country, and repell'd
Th' aſſault of foreign foes, whoſe raging force
Ruſh'd like a torrent threat'ning to o'erwhelm us.

# AGAMEMNON.

# AGAMEMNON.

# AGAMEMNON.

IN this tragedy the reader will find the ſtrongeſt traces of the genius of Æſchylus, and the moſt diſtinguiſhing proofs of his ſkill. Great in his conceptions, bold and daring in his metaphors, ſtrong in his paſſions, he here touches the heart with uncommon emotions. The odes are particularly ſublime, and the oracular ſpirit, that breaths thro' them, adds a wonderful elevation and dignity to them. Short as the part of Agamemnon is, the poet has the addreſs to throw ſuch an amiable dignity around him, that we ſoon become intereſted in his favour, and are præ-diſpoſed to lament his fate. The character of Clytemneſtra is finely marked; an high-ſpirited, artfull, cloſe, determined, dangerous woman. But the poet has no where exerted ſuch efforts of his genius, as in the ſcene where Caſſandra appears: As a propheteſs, ſhe gives every mark of the divine inſpiration, from the dark and diſtant hint, thro' all the noble imagery of the prophetic enthuſiaſm; till, as the cataſtrophe advances, ſhe more and more plainly declares it: As a ſuffering princeſs, her grief is plaintive, lively, and piercing; yet ſhe goes to meet her death, which ſhe clearly foretells, with a firmneſs worthy the daughter of Priam and the ſiſter of Hector: Nothing can be more animated or more intereſting than this ſcene. The conduct of the poet thro' this play is exquiſitely judicious; every ſcene gives us ſome obſcure hint, or ominous preſage, enough to keep our attention always raiſed, and to

prepare us for the event; even the ſtudied caution of Clytemneſtra is finely managed to produce that effect; whilſt the ſecreſy, with which ſhe conducts her deſign, keeps us in ſuſpenſe, and prevents a diſcovery, till we hear the dying groans of her murdered huſband.

It is to be lamented that a late amiable poet, in his tragedy on this ſubject, which too he wiſhed to have eſteemed as claſſical, ſhould have deviated ſo far from his great original, particularly in the character of Clytemneſtra: but as he wanted ſtrength of genius to imitate the noble ſimplicity of Æſchylus, his taſte led him to take Seneca for his model; and he has ſucceeded accordingly.

The ſcene of this play is at Argos, before the palace of Agamemnon.

Perſons

# Perſons of the Drama.

WATCHMAN.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

HERALD.

AGAMEMNON.

CASSANDRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

CHORUS of ARGIVE SENATORS.

Perſons of the Drama.

WAITCHMAN.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

HERALD.

AGAMEMNON.

CASSANDRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

CHORUS of Active SENATORS.

# AGAMEMNON.

The WATCHMAN.

YE fav'ring Gods, relieve me from this toil:
Fix'd, as a dog, on Agamemnon's roof
I watch the live-long year, obſerving hence
The hoſt of ſtars, that in the ſpangled ſkies
Take their bright ſtations, and to mortals bring
Winter and ſummer; radiant rulers, when
They ſet, or riſing glitter thro' the night.
Here now I watch, if haply I may ſee
The blazing torch, whoſe flame brings news from Troy,
The ſignal of its ruin: theſe high hopes
My royal miſtreſs, thinking on her lord,

Feeds

Feeds in her heart. Meanwhile the dews of night
Fall on my couch, unviſited by dreams;
For fear, leſt ſleep ſhou'd cloſe my eyes, repells
The ſoft intruder. When my ſpirits prompt me
To raiſe the ſong, or hum the ſullen notes
Preventing ſlumber, then I ſigh, and wail
The ſtate of this unhappy houſe, no more
Well-order'd as of old. But may my toils
Be happily reliev'd! Blaze, thou bright flame,
Herald of joy, blaze thro' the gloomy ſhades.—
And it does blaze.—Hail, thou auſpicious flame,
That ſtreaming thro' the night denounceſt joy,
Welcom'd with many a feſtal dance in Argos!—
In the queen's ear I'll holla this, and rouſe her
From her ſoft couch with ſpeed, that ſhe may teach
The royal dome to echo with the ſtrains
Of choral warblings greeting this bleſt fire,
Bright ſign that Troy is taken. Nor ſhall I
Forbear the prelude to the dance before her:
For by this watch, ſo proſperouſly concluded,
I to my maſters ſhall aſſure good fortune.
Shall I then ſee my king return'd; once more

To grace this houſe? and ſhall this hand once more
Hang on his friendly hand?—I cou'd unfold
A tale.—But, huſh; my tongue is chain'd: theſe walls,
Cou'd they but ſpeak, wou'd make diſcoveries.
There are who know this; and to them this hint
Were plain: to thoſe, that know it not, myſterious.

CHORUS.

The tenth ſlow year rolls on, ſince great in arms
The noble ſons of Atreus, each exalted
To majeſty and empire, royal brothers,
Led hence a thouſand ſhips, the Argive fleet,
Big with the fate of Priam and of Troy;
A warlike preparation; their bold breaſts
Breathing heroic ardor to high deeds;
Like vulturs, which, their unplumed offspring loſt,
Whirl many' a rapid flight, for that their toil
To guard their young was vain: 'till ſome high pow'r,
For they are dear to Phœbus, dear to Pan,
And Jove, with pity hears their ſhrill-voic'd grief,
And ſends, tho' late, the fury to avenge
Their plunder'd neſts on the unpitying ſpoilers.
So now the pow'r of hoſpitable Jove

Arms againſt Paris, for th' oft-wedded dame,
The ſons of Atreus, bent to plunge the hoſts
Of Greece and Troy in all the toils, that ſink
The body down, the firm knee bow'd in duſt,
And the ſtrong ſpear, e'er conqueſt crowns their helms,
Shiver'd in battle. Theſe are what they are,
And Fate directs th' event: nor the bent knee,
Libation pure, or ſupplicating tear,
Can ſooth the ſtern rage of thoſe mercileſs pow'rs
In whoſe cold ſhrine no hallow'd flame aſcends.
But we, our age-enfeebled limbs unfit
For martial toils, inglorious here remain,
The ſtaff ſupporting our weak ſteps, like children:
For as the infant years have not attain'd
The military vigor, wither'd age
Crawls thro' the ſtreets like helpleſs infancy,
And paſſes as a day-dream.—But what tidings,
What circumſtance of fair event hath reach'd
The royal ears, daughter of Tyndarus,
Inducing thee to ſend the victims round?
The ſhrines of all the Gods, whoſe guardian cares
Watch o'er this ſtate, be they enthron'd in Heav'n,

Or rule beneath the Earth, blaze with thy preſents;
And from th' imperial dome a length'ned line
Of torches ſhoot their luſtre to the ſkies.
O tell me what is fit for me to know,
And prudence ſuffers to be told: ſpeak peace
To this anxiety, which one while ſwells
Preſaging ill, and one while from the victims
Catches a gleam of hope, whoſe chearing ray
Breaks thro' the gloom that darkens o'er my ſoul.

STROPHE.

It ſwells upon my ſoul; I feel the pow'r
To hail th' auſpicious hour,
When, their brave hoſts marching in firm array,
The heroes led the way.
The fire of youth glows in each vein,
And heav'n-born confidence inſpires the ſtrain.
Pleas'd the omen to record,
That to Troy's ill-fated ſtrand
Led each monarch, mighty lord,
Led the bold confederate band,
The ſtrong ſpear quiv'ring in their vengefull hand.

Full in each royal chieftain's view
A royal eagle whirls his flight;
In plumage one of duſky hue,
And one his dark wings edg'd with white;
Swift to th' imperial manſion take their way,
And in their armed talons bear,
Seiz'd in its flight, a pregnant hare,
And in thoſe ſplendid ſeats enjoy their prey.

Sound high the ſtrain, the ſwelling notes prolong,
Till conqueſt liſtens to the raptur'd ſong.

## ANTISTROPHE.

The venerable ſeer, whoſe ſkill divine
Knows what the Fates deſign,
On each bold chief, that for the battle burns,
His glowing eye-ball turns;
And thus in high prophetic ſtrains
The rav'ning eagles and their prey explains:
" Priam's haughty town ſhall fall,
" Slow they roll, the deſtin'd hours,

" Fate

" Fate and fury ſhake her wall,
" Vengeance wide the ruin pours,
" And conqueſt ſeizes all her treaſur'd ſtores.
" Ah, may no ſtorm from th' angry ſky
" Burſt dreadfull o'er this martial train,
" Nor check their ardor, flaming high
" To pour the war o'er Troy's proud plain!
" Wrath kindles in the chaſt Diana's breaſt:
" Gorg'd with the pregnant mother's blood,
" And, e'er the birth, her hapleſs brood,
" Hell-hounds of Jove, ſhe hates your horrid feaſt.

" Sound high the ſtrain, the ſwelling notes prolong,
" Till conqueſt liſtens to the raptur'd ſong.

## EPODE.

" The virgin Goddeſs of the chace,
" Fair from the ſpangled dew-drops that adorn
" The breathing flowrets of the morn,
" Protectreſs of the infant race
" Of all that haunt the tangled grove,
" Or o'er the rugged mountains rove,

" She,

" She, beauteous queen, commands me to declare
" What by the royal birds is ſhown,
" Signal of conqueſt, omen fair,
" But darken'd by her awefull frown.
" God of the diſtant-wounding bow,
" Thee, Pæan, thee I call; hear us, and aid:
" Ah, may not the offended maid
" Give the ſullen gales to blow,
" Adverſe to this eager train,
" And bar th' unnavigable main:
" Nor other ſacrifice demand,
" At whoſe barbaric rites no feaſt is ſpread;
" But diſcord rears her horrid head,
" And calls around her murd'rous band:
" Leagued with hate, and fraud, and fear,
" Nor king, nor huſband they revere;
" Indignant o'er a daughter weep,
" And burn to ſtamp their vengeance deep."
Prophetic thus the reverend Chalcas ſpoke,
Marking th' imperial eagles' whirling wings;
From his rapt lips the joyfull preſage broke,
Succeſs and glory to th' embattled kings.

Sound

Sound high the ſtrain, th' according notes prolong,
Till conqueſt liſtens to the raptur'd ſong.

STROPHE 1.

O thou, that ſit'ſt ſupreme above,
Whatever name thou deign'ſt to hear,
Unblam'd may I pronounce thee Jove!
Immers'd in deep and holy thought,
If rightly I conjecture ought,
Thy pow'r I muſt revere:
Elſe vainly toſt the anxious mind
Nor truth, nor calm repoſe can find.
Feeble and helpleſs to the light
The proudeſt of man's race aroſe,
Tho' now, exulting in his might,
Dauntleſs he ruſhes on his foes;
Great as he is, in duſt he lies;
He meets a greater, and he dies.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

He that, when conqueſt brightens round,
Swells the triumphal ſtrain to Jove,
Shall ever with ſucceſs be crown'd.

Yet

Yet often, when to wiſdom's ſeat
Jove deigns to guide man's erring feet,
His virtues to improve;
He to affliction gives command
To form him with her chaſt'ning hand:
The memory of her rigid lore,
On the ſad heart imprinted deep,
Attends him thro' day's active hour,
Nor in the night forſakes his ſleep.
Inſtructed thus thy grace we own,
O thou, that ſit'ſt on Heav'n's high throne!

STROPHE 2.

When now in Aulis' rolling bay
His courſe the refluent floods refus'd,
And ſick'ning with inaction lay
In dead repoſe th' exhauſted train,
Did the firm chief of chance complain?
No prophet he accus'd;
His eyes towards Chalcis bent he ſtood,
And ſilent mark'd the ſurging flood.

Sullen

Sullen the winds from Strymon ſweep,
Miſchance and famine in the blaſt,
Ceaſeleſs torment the angry deep,
The cordage rend, the veſſels waſte,
With tedious and ſevere delay
Wear the freſh flow'r of Greece away.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

When, in Diana's name, the ſeer
Pronounc'd the dreadfull remedy
More than the ſtormy ſea ſevere,
Each chieftain ſtood in grief profound,
And ſmote his ſceptre on the ground:
Then with a riſing ſigh
The monarch, whilſt the big tears roll,
Expreſs'd the anguiſh of his ſoul;
" Dreadfull the ſentence: not t' obey,
" Vengeance and ruin cloſe us round:
" Shall then the ſire his daughter ſlay,
" In youth's freſh bloom with beauty crown'd?
" Shall on theſe hands her warm blood flow?
" Cruel alternative of woe!

STROPHE 3.

" This royal fleet, this martial hoſt,
" The cauſe of Greece, ſhall I betray,
" The monarch in the father loſt?
" To calm theſe winds, to ſmooth this flood,
" Diana's wrath a virgin's blood
" Demands: 'tis our's t' obey."
Bound in neceſſity's iron chain
Reluctant nature ſtrives in vain:
Impure, unholy thoughts ſucceed,
And dark'ning o'er his boſom roll;
Whilſt madneſs prompts the ruthleſs deed,
Tyrant of the miſguided ſoul:
Stern on the fleet he rolls his eyes,
And dooms the hatefull ſacrifice.

ANTISTROPHE 3.

Arm'd in a woman's cauſe, around
Fierce for the war the princes roſe;
No place affrighted pity found.
In vain the virgin's ſtreaming tear,
Her cries in vain, her pleading pray'r,
Her agonizing woes.

Cou'd

Cou'd the fond father hear unmov'd?
The Fates decreed: the king approv'd:
Then to th' attendants gave command
Decent her flowing robes to bind;
Prone on the altar with ſtrong hand
To place her, like a ſpotleſs hind;
And check her ſweet voice, that no ſound
Unhallow'd might the rites confound.

EPODE.

Rent on the earth her maiden veil ſhe throws,
That emulates the roſe;
And on the ſad attendants rolling
The trembling luſtre of her dewy eyes,
Their grief-empaſſion'd ſouls controlling,
That ennobled, modeſt grace,
Which the mimic pencil tries
In the imag'd form to trace,
The breathing picture ſhows:
And as, amidſt his feſtal pleaſures,
Her father oft rejoic'd to hear
Her voice in ſoft mellifluous meaſures
Warble the ſprightly-fanſied air;

So now in act to ſpeak the virgin ſtands:
But when, the third libation paid,
She heard her father's dread commands
Injoining ſilence, ſhe obey'd:
And for her country's good,
With patient, meek, ſubmiſſive mind
To her hard fate reſign'd,
Pour'd out the rich ſtream of her blood.

What ſince hath paſt I know not, nor relate;
But never did the prophet ſpeak in vain,
Th' afflicted, anxious for his future fate,
Looks forward, and with hope relieves his pain.

But ſince th' inevitable ill will come,
Much knowledge to much miſery is allied;
Why ſtrive we then t' anticipate the doom,
Which happineſs and wiſdom wiſh to hide?

Yet let this careſull, age-enfeebled band
Breath from our inmoſt ſoul one ardent vow,
Now the ſole guardians of this Apian land,
" May fair ſucceſs with glory bind her brow!"

CLYTEMNESTRA,

CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

With reverence, Clytemneſtra, I approach
Thy greatneſs; honour due to her that fills
The royal ſeat, yet vacant of its lord.
If ought of glad import hath reach'd thy ear,
Or to fair hope the victim bleeds, I wiſh,
But with ſubmiſſion to thy will, to hear.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The joy-importing morn ſprings, as they ſay,
From night, her mother. Thou ſhalt hear a joy
Beyond thy hopes to hear: The town of Priam
Is fall'n beneath the conquering arms of Greece.

CHORUS.

What ſaid'ſt thou? Paſſing credence fled thy word.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

In Troy Greece triumphs. Speak I clearly now?

CHORUS.

Joy ſteals upon me, and calls forth the tear.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thy gliſt'ning eye beſpeaks an honeſt heart.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Does ought of certain proof confirm theſe tidings?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

It does: Why not? Unleſs the Gods deceive us.

CHORUS.

Perchance the viſions of perſuaſive dreams.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Sport of the ſlumb'ring ſoul; they move not me.

CHORUS.

Hath then ſome winged rumor ſpread theſe tranſports?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

As a raw girl's, thou hold'ſt my judgement cheap.

CHORUS.

How long has ruin cruſh'd this haughty city?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This night, that gave this infant morning birth.

CHORUS.

What ſpeed cou'd be the herald of this news?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The fire, that from the height of Ida ſent
Its ſtreaming light, as from th' announcing flame

Torch

Torch blaz'd to torch. Firſt Ida to the ſteep
Of Lemnos; Atho's ſacred height receiv'd
The mighty ſplendor; o'er the ſurging back
Of th' Helleſpont the vig'rous blaze held on
Its ſmiling way, and like the orient ſun
Illumes with golden-gleaming rays the head
Of rocky Macetas; nor lingers there,
Nor winks unheedfull, but its warning flames
Darts to the ſtreams of Euripus, and gives
Its glitt'ring ſignal to the guards that hold
Their high watch on Meſapius. Theſe enkindle
The joy-denouncing fires, that ſpread the blaze
To where Erica hoar its ſhaggy brow
Waves rudely. Unimpair'd the active flame
Bounds o'er the level of Aſopus, like
The jocund Moon, and on Cithæron's ſteep
Wakes a ſucceſſive flame; the diſtant watch
Agnize its ſhine, and raiſe a brighter fire,
That o'er the lake Gorgopis ſtreaming holds
Its rapid courſe, and on the mountainous heights
Of Ægiplanctus huge, ſwift-ſhooting ſpreads
The lengthen'd line of light. Thence onwards waves

Its firey treſſes, eager to aſcend
The crags of Prone, frowning in their pride
O'er the Saronic gulf: it leaps, it mounts
The ſummit of Arachne, whoſe high head
Looks down on Argos: to this royal ſeat
Thence darts the light that from th' Idæan fire
Derives its birth. Rightly in order thus
Each to the next conſigns the torch, and fills
The bright ſucceſſion, whilſt the firſt in ſpeed
Vies with the laſt: the promis'd ſignal this
Giv'n by my lord t' announce the fall of Troy.

CHORUS.

Anon my gratefull praiſe ſhall riſe to Heav'n:
Now, lady, wou'd I willingly attend
Thro' each glad circumſtance the wond'rous tale.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This day the conquering Greeks are lords of Troy.
Methinks I hear the various clamours riſe
Diſcordant thro' the city. Pour thou oil
In the ſame vaſe and vinegar, in vain
Wou'dſt thou perſuade th' unſocial ſtreams to mix:
The captives' and the conqueror's voice diſtinct,

Marks

Marks of their different fortune, may'ſt thou hear:
Thoſe rolling on the bodies of the ſlain,
Friends, huſbands, brothers, fathers; the weak arms
Of children claſp'd around the bleeding limbs
Of hoary age; lament their fall, their necks
Bent to the yoke of ſlavery: Eager theſe
From the fierce toils of war, who thro' the gloom
Of night rang'd wide, fly on the ſpoils, as chance
Not order, leads them; in the Trojan houſes,
Won by their ſpears, they walk at large, reliev'd
From the cold dews dropt from th' unſhelter'd ſky;
And at th' approach of eve, like thoſe whoſe pow'r
Commands ſecurity, the eaſy night
Shall ſleep unguarded. If with hallow'd rites
They venerate the Gods that o'er the city,
With thoſe that o'er the vanquiſh'd country rule,
And reverence their ſhrines, the conquering troops
Shall not be conquer'd. May no baſe deſire,
No guilty wiſh urge them, enthrall'd to gain,
To break thro' ſacred laws. Behoves them now,
With ſafety in their train, backward to plow
The refluent wave. Shou'd they return expos'd

To th' anger of the Gods, vengeance wou'd wake
To ſeize its prey, might they perchance eſcape
Life's incidental ills. From me thou heareſt
A woman's ſentiment; and much I wiſh,
Their glories by no rude miſchance depreſs'd,
To cull from many bleſſings the moſt precious.

CHORUS.

With manly ſentiment thy wiſdom, lady,
Speaks well. Confiding in thy ſuaſive ſigns,
Prepare we to addreſs the Gods; our ſtrains
Shall not without their meed of honour riſe.

PROSODE.

Supreme of kings, Jove; and thou, friendly night,
That wide o'er Heav'n's ſtar-ſpangled plain
Holdeſt thy awefull reign,
Thou, that with reſiſtleſs might
O'er Troy's proud tow'rs, and deſtin'd ſtate,
Haſt thrown the ſecret net of fate,
In whoſe enormous ſweep the young, the old,
Without diſtinction roll'd,
Are with unſparing fury drag'd away
To ſlavery and woe a prey:

Thee,

Thee, hoſpitable Jove, whoſe vengefull pow'r
Theſe terrors o'er the foe has ſpread,
Thy bow long bent at Paris' head,
Whoſe arrows know their time to fly,
Not hurtling aimleſs in the ſky,
Our pious ſtrains adore.

STROPHE 1.

The hand of Jove will they not own;
And, as his marks they trace,
Confeſs he will'd, and it was done?
Who now of earth-born race
Shall dare contend that his high pow'r
Deigns not with eye ſevere to view
The wretch, that tramples on his law?
Hence with this impious lore:
Learn that the ſons accurs'd ſhall rue
The madly daring father's pride,
That furious drew th' unrighteous ſword,
High in his houſe the rich ſpoils ſtor'd,
And the avenging Gods defied.
But be it mine to draw

From wiſdom's fount, pure as it flows,
That calm of ſoul, which virtue only knows.
For vain the ſhield, that wealth ſhall ſpread,
To guard the proud oppreſſor's head,
Who dares the rites of juſtice to confound,
And ſpurn her altars to the ground.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

But ſuaſive is the voice of vice,
That ſpreads th' inſidious ſnare:
She, not conceal'd, thro' her diſguiſe
Emits a livid glare.
Her vot'ry, like adult'rate braſs
Unfaithfull to its uſe, unſound,
Proves the dark baſeneſs of his ſoul;
Fond as a boy to chace
The winged bird light-flitting round,
And bent on his pernicious play
Draws deſolation on his ſtate.
His vows no God regards, when Fate
In vengeance ſweeps the wretch away.
With baſe intent and foul,

Each

Each hoſpitable law defied,
From Sparta's king thus Paris ſtole his bride.
To Greece ſhe left the ſhield, the ſpear,
The naval armament of war;
And, bold in ill, to Troy's devoted ſhore
Deſtruction for her dowry bore.

STROPHE 2.

When thro' the gates her eaſy way
She took, his penſive breaſt
Each prophet ſmote in deep diſmay,
And thus his grief expreſt,
"What woes this royal manſion threat,
"This manſion, and its mighty lord?
"Where now the chaſt connubial bed?
"The traces of her feet,
"By love to her bleſt conſort led,
"Where now? Ah, ſilent, ſee, ſhe ſtands;
"Each glowing tint, each radiant grace,
"That charm th' enraptur'd eye, we trace;
"And ſtill the blooming form commands,
"Still honour'd, ſtill ador'd,

Tho'

" Tho' careleſs of her former loves
" Far o'er the rolling ſea the wanton roves:
" The huſband, with a burſting ſigh,
" Turns from the pictur'd fair his eye;
" Whilſt love, by abſence fed, without controul
" Tumultuous ruſhes on his ſoul.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

" Oft as ſhort ſlumbers cloſe his eyes,
" His ſad ſoul ſooth'd to reſt,
" The dream-created viſions riſe,
" With all her charms impreſt:
" But vain th' ideal ſcene, that ſmiles
" With rapt'rous love and warm delight;
" Vain his fond hopes: his eager arms
" The fleeting form beguiles,
" On ſleep's quick pinions paſſing light."
Such griefs, and more ſevere than theſe,
Their ſad gloom o'er the palace ſpread;
Thence ſtretch their melancholy ſhade,
And darken o'er the realms of Greece.
Struck with no falſe alarms

Each

Each houſe its home-felt ſorrow knows,
Each bleeding heart is pierc'd with keeneſt woes;
When for the hero, ſent to ſhare
The glories of the crimſon war,
Nought, ſave his arms ſtain'd with their maſter's gore,
And his cold aſhes reach the ſhore.

STROPHE 3.

Thus in the dire exchange of war
Does Mars the balance hold;
Helms are the ſcales, the beam a ſpear,
And blood is weigh'd for gold.
Thus, for the warrior, to his friends
His ſad remains, a poor return,
Sav'd from the ſullen fire that roſe
On Troy's curſt ſhore, he ſends,
Plac'd decent in the mournfull urn.
With many' a tear their dead they weep,
Their names with many' a praiſe reſound;
One for his ſkill in arms renown'd;
One, that amidſt the ſlaughter'd heap
Of fierce-conflicting foes

Glorious

Glorious in beauty's cauſe he fell:
Yet 'gainſt th' avenging chiefs their murmurs ſwell
In ſilence. Some in youth's freſh bloom
Beneath Troy's tow'rs poſſeſs a tomb;
Their bodies buried on the diſtant ſtrand,
Seizing in death the hoſtile land.

ANTISTROPHE 3.

How dreadfull, when the people raiſe
Loud murmurs mix'd with hate!
Yet this the tribute greatneſs pays
For its exalted ſtate.
E'en now ſome dark and horrid deed
By my preſaging ſoul is fear'd;
For never with unheedfull eyes,
When ſlaughter'd thouſands bleed,
Did the juſt pow'rs of Heav'n regard
The carnage of th' enſanguin'd plain.
The ruthleſs and oppreſſive pow'r
May triumph for its little hour;
Full ſoon with all their vengefull train
The ſullen Furies riſe,

Break

Break his fell force, and whirl him down
Thro' life's dark paths, unpitied, and unknown.
And dangerous is the pride of fame,
Like the red light'nings dazzling flame.
Nor envied wealth, nor conqueſt let me gain,
Nor drag the conqueror's hatefull chain.

EPODE.

But from theſe fires far ſtreaming thro' the night
Fame thro' the town her progreſs takes,
And rapt'rous joy awakes;
If with truth's auſpicious light
They ſhine, who knows? Her ſacred reign
Nor fraud, nor falſehood dares prophane.
But who, in wiſdom's ſchool ſo lightly taught,
Suffers his ardent thought
From theſe informing flames to catch the fire,
Full ſoon perchance in grief t' expire?
Yet when a woman holds the ſovereign ſway,
Obſequious wiſdom learns to bow,
And hails the joy it does not know;

Tho', as the glitt'ring viſions roll
Before her eaſy, credulous ſoul,
Their glories fade away.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Whether theſe fires, that with ſucceſſive ſignals
Blaze thro' the night, be true, or like a dream
Play with a ſweet deluſion on the ſoul,
Soon ſhall we know. An herald from the ſhore
I ſee; branches of olive ſhade his brows.
That cloud of duſt, rais'd by his ſpeed, aſſures me
That neither ſpeechleſs, nor enkindling flames
Along the mountains, will he ſignify
His meſſage; but his tongue ſhall greet our ears
With words of joy: far from my ſoul the thought
Of other, than confirm theſe fav'ring ſignals.

CHORUS.

May he, that to this ſtate ſhall form a wiſh
Of other aim, on his own head receive it.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS, HERALD.

HERALD.

Hail, thou paternal ſoil of Argive earth!
In the fair light of the tenth year to thee
Return'd, from the ſad wreck of many hopes
This one I ſave; ſav'd from deſpair e'en this;
For never thought I in this honour'd earth
To ſhare in death the portion of a tomb.
Hail then, lov'd earth; hail, thou bright ſun; and thou,
Great guardian of my country, ſupreme Jove;
Thou, Pythian king, thy ſhafts no longer wing'd
For our deſtruction; on Scamander's banks
Enough we mourn'd thy wrath; propitious now
Come, king Apollo, our defence. And all
Ye Gods, that o'er the works of war preſide,
I now invoke; thee, Mercury, my avenger,
Rever'd by heralds, that from thee derive
Their high employ; you heroes, to the war
That ſent us, friendly now receive our troops,
The relicks of the ſpear. Imperial walls,
Manſion of kings, ye ſeats rever'd; ye Gods,
That to the golden ſun before theſe gates

Preſent your honour'd forms; if e'er of old
Thoſe eyes with favour have beheld the king,
Receive him now, after this length of time,
With glory; for he comes, and with him brings
To you, and all, a light that chears this gloom:
Then greet him well; ſuch honour is his meed,
The mighty king, that with the mace of Jove
Th' avenger, wherewith he ſubdues the earth,
Hath level'd with the duſt the tow'rs of Troy;
Their altars are o'erturn'd, their ſacred ſhrines,
And all the race deſtroy'd. This iron yoke
Fix'd on the neck of Troy, victorious comes
The great Atrides, of all mortal men
Worthy of higheſt honours. Paris now,
And the perfidious ſtate, ſhall boaſt no more
His proud deeds unreveng'd; ſtript of his ſpoils,
The debt of juſtice for his thefts, his rapines,
Paid amply, o'er his father's houſe he ſpreads
With twofold loſs the wide-involving ruin.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Joy to thee, herald of the Argive hoſt.

HERALD.

HERALD.

For joy like this death were a cheap exchange.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Strong thy affection to thy native ſoil.

HERALD.

So ſtrong, the tear of joy ſtarts from my eye.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What, hath this ſweet infection reach'd e'en you?

HERALD.

Beyond the pow'r of language have I felt it.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The fond deſire of thoſe, whoſe equal love—

HERALD.

This of the army ſay'ſt thou, whoſe warm love
Streams to this land? Is this thy fond deſire?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Such that I oft' have breath'd the ſecret ſigh.

HERALD.

Whence did the army cauſe this anxious ſadneſs?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Silence I long have held an healing balm.

HERALD.

HERALD.

The princes abſent, had'ſt thou whom to fear?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

To uſe thy words, death were a wiſh'd exchange.

HERALD.

Well is the conflict ended. In the tide
Of ſo long time, if 'midſt the eaſy flow
Of wiſh'd events ſome tyrannous blaſt aſſail us,
What marvel? Who, ſave the bleſt Gods, can claim
Thro' life's whole courſe an unmix'd happineſs?
Shou'd I relate our toils, our wretched plight
Wedg'd in our narrow ill-provided cabbins,
Each irkſome hour was loaded with fatigues.
Yet theſe were ſlight aſſays to thoſe worſe hardſhips
We ſuffer'd on the ſhore; our lodging near
The walls of the enemy, the dews of Heav'n
Fell on us from above, the damps beneath
From the moiſt marſh annoy'd us, ſhrouded ill
In ſhaggy cov'rings. Or ſhou'd one relate
The winter's keen blaſts, which from Ida's ſnows
Breath frore, that pierc'd thro' all their plumes the birds

Shiver

Shiver and die; or th' extreme heat that ſcalds,
When in his mid-day caves the ſea reclines,
And not a breeze diſturbs his calm repoſe.
But why lament theſe ſufferings? They are paſt;
Paſt to the dead indeed; they lie, no more
Anxious to riſe. What then avails to count
Thoſe, whom the waſtefull war hath ſwept away,
And with their loſs afflict the living? Rather
Bid we farewell to miſery: in our ſcale,
Who haply of the Grecian hoſt remain,
The good preponderates, and in counterpoiſe
Our loſs is light; and, after all our toils
By ſea and land, before yon' golden ſun
It is our glorious privilege to boaſt,
" At length from vanquiſh'd Troy our warlike troops
" Have to the Gods of Greece brought home theſe ſpoils,
" And in their Temples, to record our conqueſts,
" Fix'd theſe proud trophies." Thoſe, that hear this boaſt,
It well becomes to gratulate the ſtate,
And the brave chiefs; revering Jove's high pow'r
That grac'd our conquering arms. Thou haſt my meſſage.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Thy words convince me; all my doubts are vaniſh'd:
But ſcrupulous inquiry grows with age.
On Clytemneſtra and the chiefs this charge,
Bleſſing e'en me with the rich joy, devolves.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Long ſince my voice rais'd high each note of joy,
When thro' the night the ſtreaming blaze firſt came,
And told us Troy was taken: Not unblam'd
That, as a woman lightly credulous,
I let a mountain fire tranſport my ſoul
With the fond hope that Ilion's haughty tow'rs
Were humbled in the duſt. At this rebuke
Tho' ſomewhat ſhaken, yet I ſacrific'd;
And, as weak women wont, one voice of joy
Awoke another, till the city rang
Thro' all its ſtreets; and at the hallow'd ſhrines
Each rais'd the pious ſtrains of gratitude,
And fan'd the altars' incenſe-breathing flame.
But it is needleſs to detain thee longer,
Soon from the king's own lips ſhall I learn all.

How

How beſt I may receive my honour'd lord,
And grace his wiſh'd return, now claims my ſpeed.
Can Heav'n's fair beam ſhow a fond wife a ſight
More gratefull than her huſband from his wars
Return'd with glory, when ſhe opes the gate,
And ſprings to welcome him? Tell my lord this,
That he may haſten his deſir'd return:
And tell him he will find his faithfull wife,
Such as he left her, a domeſtic creature
To him all fondneſs, to his enemies
Irreconcileable; and tell him too
That ten long years have not effac'd the ſeal
Of Conſtancy; that never knew I pleaſure
In the blamed converſe of another man,
More than the virgin metal in the mines
Knows an adulterate and debaſing mixture.

CHORUS.

This high boaſt, lady, ſanctified by truth,
Is not unſeemly in thy princely rank.

HERALD, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

This, for thy information, hath ſhe ſpoken
With dignity and truth. Now tell me, herald,
Of Sparta's king wiſh I to queſtion thee,
The pride of Greece: returns he ſafe with you?

HERALD.

Never can I eſteem a falſehood honeſt,
Tho' my friends long enjoy the ſweet deluſion.

CHORUS.

What then if thou relate an honeſt truth?
From this diſtinction the conjecture's eaſy.

HERALD.

Him from the Grecian fleet our eyes have loſt,
The hero and his ſhip. This is the truth.

CHORUS.

Chanc'd this, when in your ſight he weigh'd from Troy;
Or in a ſtorm, that rent him from the fleet?

HERALD.

Rightly is thy conjecture aim'd, in brief
Touching the long recital of our loſs.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

How deem'd the other mariners of this;
That the ſhip periſh'd, or rode out the ſtorm?

HERALD.

Who, ſave yon' ſun the regent of the earth,
Can give a clear and certain information?

CHORUS.

How ſaid'ſt thou then a ſtorm, not without loſs,
Wing'd with Heav'n's fury, toſt the ſhatter'd fleet.

HERALD.

It is not meet, with inauſpicious tongue
Spreading ill tidings, to profane a day
Sacred to feſtal joy: the Gods require
Their pure rites undiſturbed. When with a brow
Witneſs of woe, the meſſenger relates
Unwelcome news, defeats, and ſlaughter'd armies,
The wound with general grief affects the ſtate;
And with particular and private ſorrow
Full many' an houſe, for many that have fall'n
Victims to Mars, who to his bloody car
Delights to yoke his terrors, ſword and ſpear.
A pæan to the Furies wou'd become

The bearer of ſuch pond'rous heap of ills.
My tidings are of conqueſt and ſucceſs
Diffuſing joy: with theſe glad ſounds how mix
Diſtreſs, and ſpeak of ſtorms, and angry Gods?—
The pow'rs, before moſt hoſtile, now conſpir'd,
Fire and the ſea, in ruin reconcil'd:
And in a night of tempeſt wild from Thrace
In all their fury ruſh'd the howling winds;
Toſt by the forcefull blaſts ſhip againſt ſhip
In hideous conflict daſh'd, or diſappear'd,
Driv'n at the boiſt'rous whirlwind's dreadfull will.
But when the ſun's fair light return'd, we ſee
Bodies of Grecians, and the wreck of ſhips
Float on the chaf'd foam of th' Ægæan ſea.
Us and our ſhip ſome God, the pow'r of man
Were all too weak, holding the helm preſerv'd
Unhurt, or interceding for our ſafety;
And Fortune the deliverer ſteer'd our courſe
To ſhun the waves, that near the harbour's mouth
Boil high, or break upon the rocky ſhore.
Eſcap'd th' ingulfing ſea, yet ſcarce ſecure
Of our eſcape, thro' the fair day we view

With

With ſighs the recent ſufferings of the hoſt
Cov'ring the ſea with wrecks. If any breath
This vital air, they deem us loſt, as we
Think the ſame ruin theirs. Fain fall th' event!
But firſt and chief expect the Spartan king
T' arrive; if yet one ray of yon' bright ſun
Beholds him living, thro' the care of Jove,
Who wills not to deſtroy that royal race,
Well may we hope to joy in his return.
Having heard this, know thou haſt heard the truth.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

Is there to names a charm profound
Expreſſive of their fates aſſign'd,
Myſterious potency of ſound;
And truth in wond'rous accord join'd?
Why elſe this fatal name,
That Helen and deſtruction are the ſame?
Affianc'd in contention, led,
The ſpear her dowry, to the bridal bed;

With

With deſolation in her train,
Fatal to martial hoſts, to rampir'd tow'rs,
From the rich fragrance of her gorgeous bow'rs,
Deſcending to the main,
She haſtes to ſpread her flying ſails,
And calls the earth-born zephyr's gales.
Whilſt heroes, breathing vengeance, ſnatch their ſhields,
And trace her light oars o'er the pathleſs waves,
To the thick ſhades freſh waving o'er thoſe fields,
Which Simois with his ſilver windings laves.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

To Troy the ſhining miſchief came,
Before her young-ey'd pleaſures play;
But in the rear with ſtedfaſt aim
Grim-viſag'd vengeance marks his prey,
Waiting the dreadfull hour
The terrors of offended Heav'n to pour
On thoſe that dar'd, an impious train,
The rights of hoſpitable Jove prophane;
Nor rever'd that ſacred ſong,

Whoſe

Whoſe melting ſtrains the bride's approach declare,
As Hymen wakes the rapture-breathing air.
Far other notes belong,
The voice of mirth now heard no more,
To Priam's ſtate: its ruins o'er
Wailing inſtead, diſtreſs, and loud lament;
Long ſorrows ſprung from that unholy bed,
And many' a curſe in heart-ſelf anguiſh ſent
On its woe-wedded Paris' hated head.

STROPHE 2.

The woodman, from his thirſty lair,
Reft of his dam, a lion bore;
Foſter'd his future foe with care
To miſchiefs he muſt ſoon deplore:
Gentle and tame, whilſt young,
Harmleſs he friſk'd the fondling babes among;
Oft in the father's boſom lay,
Oft' lick'd his feeding hand in fawning play;
Till, conſcious of his firmer age,
His lion-race the lordly ſavage ſhows;
No more his youth-protecting cottage knows,

But

But with inſatiate rage
Flies on the flocks, a baleſull gueſt,
And riots in th' unbidden feaſt:
Whilſt thro' his mangled folds the hapleſs ſwain
With horror ſees th' unbounded carnage ſpread;
And learns too late that from th' infernal reign
A prieſt of Ate in his houſe was bred.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

To Ilion's tow'rs in wanton ſtate
With ſpeed ſhe wings her eaſy way;
Soft gales obedient round her wait,
And pant on the delighted ſea.
Attendant on her ſide
The richeſt ornaments of ſplendid pride;
The darts, whoſe golden points inſpire,
Shot from her eyes, the flames of ſoft deſire;
The youthfull bloom of roſy love,
That fills with extaſy the willing ſoul;
With duteous zeal obey her ſweet controul.
But, ſuch the doom of Jove,

Vindictive

Vindictive round her nuptial bed,
With threat'ning mein and footstep dread,
Rushes, to Priam and his state severe,
To rend the bleeding heart her stern delight,
And from the bridal eye to force the tear,
Erinnys, rising from the realms of night.

EPODE.

From ev'ry mouth we oft' have heard
This saying, for its age rever'd;
" With joy we see our offspring rise,
" And happy, who not childless dies:
" But fortune, when her flowrets blow,
" Oft' bears the bitter fruit of woe."
Tho' these saws are as truths allow'd,
Thus I dare differ from the croud,
" One base deed, with prolific pow'r,
" Like its curst stock engenders more:
" But to the just, with blooming grace
" Still florishes a beauteous race."

The old injuſtice joys to breed
Her young, inſtinct with villainous deed;
The young her deſtin'd hour will find
To ruſh in miſchief on mankind:
She too in Ate's murky cell,
Brings forth the hideous child of hell,
A burden to th' offended ſky,
The pow'r of bold impiety.

But Juſtice bids her ray divine
E'en on the low-roof'd cottage ſhine;
And beams her glories on the life,
That knows not fraud, nor ruffian ſtrife.
The gorgeous glare of gold, obtain'd
By foul polluted hands, diſdain'd
She leaves, and with averted eyes
To humbler, holier manſions flies;
And looking thro' the times to come
Aſſigns each deed its righteous doom.

CHORUS.

CHORUS, AGAMEMNON.

CHORUS.

My royal lord, by whoſe victorious hand
The tow'rs of Troy are fall'n, illuſtrious ſon
Of Atreus, with what words, what reverence
Shall I addreſs thee, not t' o'erleap the bounds
Of modeſt duty, nor to ſink beneath
An honorable welcome? Some there are,
That form themſelves to ſeem, more than to be,
Tranſgreſſing honeſty: to him that feels
Misfortune's rugged hand, full many' a tongue
Shall drop condolence, tho' th' unfeeling heart
Knows not the touch of ſorrow; theſe again
In fortune's ſummer gale with the like art
Shall dreſs in forc'd ſmiles the unwilling face:
But him the penetrating eye ſoon marks,
That in the ſeemly garb of honeſt zeal
Attempts to cloath his meager blandiſhments.
When firſt in Helen's cauſe my royal lord
Levied his hoſt, let me not hide the truth,
Notes, other than of muſic, echoed wide
In loud complaints from ſuch as deem'd him raſh,

And void of reaſon, by conſtraint to plant
In breaſts averſe the martial ſoul, that glows
Deſpiſing death. But now their eager zeal
Streams friendly to thoſe chiefs, whoſe proſp'rous valour
Is crown'd with conqueſt. Soon then ſhalt thou learn,
As each ſupports the ſtate, or ſtrives to rend it
With faction, who reveres thy dignity.

AGAMEMNON.

To Argos firſt, and to my country Gods
I bow with reverence, by whoſe holy guidance
On Troy's proud tow'rs I pour'd their righteous vengeance,
And now reviſit ſafe my native ſoil.
No loud-tongued pleader heard, they judg'd the cauſe,
And in the bloody urn, without one vote
Diſſentient, caſt the lots that fix'd the fate
Of Ilion and its ſons: the other vaſe
Left empty, ſave of widow'd hope. The ſmoke,
Rolling in duſky wreaths, ſhows that the town
Is fall'n; the firey ſtorm yet lives, and high
The dying aſhes toſs rich clouds of wealth
Conſum'd. For this behoves us to the Gods
Render our gratefull thanks, and that they ſpread

The

The net of fate ſweeping with angry ruin.
In beauty's cauſe the Argive monſter rear'd
Its bulk enormous, to th' affrighted town
Portending devaſtation; in its womb
Hiding embattled hoſts, ruſh'd furious forth,
About the ſetting of the Pleiades,
And, as a lion rav'ning for its prey,
Ramp'd o'er their walls, and lap'd the blood of kings.
This to the Gods addreſs'd, I turn me now
Attentive to thy caution: I approve
Thy juſt remark, and with my voice confirm it.
Few have the fortitude of ſoul to honour
A friend's ſucceſs, without a touch of envy;
For that malignant paſſion to the heart
Cleaves cloſe, and with a double burden loads
The man infected with it: firſt he feels
In all their weight his own calamities,
Then ſighs to ſee the happineſs of others.
This of my own experience have I learn'd;
And this I know, that many, who in public
Have born the ſemblance of my firmeſt friends,
Are but the flatt'ring image of a ſhadow

Reflected

Reflected from a mirror: Save Ulyſſes,
Alone, who, tho' averſe to join our arms,
Yok'd in his martial harneſs from my ſide
Swerv'd not; living or dead be this his praiſe.
But what concerns our kingdom and the Gods,
Holding a general counſil of the ſtate,
We will conſult; that what is well may keep
Its goodneſs permanent, and what requires
Our healing hand, with mild ſeverity
May be corrected. But my royal roof
Now will I viſit, and before its hearths
Offer libations to the Gods, who ſent me
To this far diſtant war, and led me back.
Firm ſtand the victory that attends our arms.

CLYTEMNESTRA, AGAMEMNON, CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Friends, fellow-citizens, whoſe counſils guide
The ſtate of Argos, in your reverend preſence
A wife's fond love I bluſh not to diſcloſe:
Thus habit ſoftens dread. From my full heart
Will I recount my melancholy life

Thro'

Thro' the long ſtay of my lov'd lord at Troy:
For a weak woman, in her huſband's abſence,
Penſive to ſit and lonely in her houſe,
'Tis diſmal, liſt'ning to each frightfull tale:
Firſt one alarms her, then another comes
Charg'd with worſe tidings. Had my poor lord here
Suffer'd as many wounds as common fame
Reported, like a net he had been pierc'd:
Had he been ſlain oft' as the loud-tongued rumour
Was nois'd abroad, Geryon's triple mail
Muſt yield the palm to him, were he now living,
For of the dead I ſpeak not, and cou'd boaſt
His triple form thrice multiplied, to die
In each form ſingly. Such reports oppreſs'd me,
Till life became diſtaſtefull, and my hands
Were prompted oft' to deeds of deſperation.
Nor is thy ſon Oreſtes, the dear tie
That binds us each to th' other, preſent here
To aid me, as he ought: nay, marvel not,
The friendly Strophius with a right ſtrong arm
Protects him in Phocæa; whilſt his care
Saw danger threat me in a double form,

The

The loſs of thee at Troy, the anarchy
That might enſue, ſhou'd madneſs drive the people
To deeds of violence, as men are prompt
Inſultingly to trample on the fall'n:
Such care dwells not with fraud. At thy return
The guſhing fountains of my tears are dried,
Save that my eyes are weak with midnight watchings,
Straining, thro' tears, if haply they might ſee
Thy ſignal fires, that claim'd my fix'd attention.
If they were clos'd in ſleep, a ſilly fly
Wou'd, with its ſlighteſt murm'rings, make me ſtart,
And wake me to more fears. For thy dear ſake
All this I ſuffer'd: but my jocond heart
Forgets it all, whilſt I behold my lord,
My guardian, the ſtrong anchor of my hope,
The ſtately column that ſupports my houſe,
Dear as an only child to a fond parent;
Welcome as land, which the toſt mariner
Beyond his hope deſcries; welcome as day
After a night of ſtorms with fairer beams
Returning; welcome as the liquid lapſe
Of fountain to the thirſty traveller:

So

So pleaſant is it to eſcape the chain
Of hard conſtraint. Such greeting I eſteem
Due to thy honour: let it not offend,
For I have ſuffer'd much. But, my lov'd lord,
Leave now that car; nor on the bare ground ſet
That royal foot, beneath whoſe mighty tread
Troy trembled. Haſte, ye virgins, to whoſe care
This pleaſing office is entruſted, ſpread
The ſtreets with tapeſtry; let the ground be cover'd
With richeſt purple, leading to the palace;
That honour with juſt ſtate may grace his entry,
Tho' unexpected. My attentive care
Shall, if the Gods permit, diſpoſe the reſt
To welcome his high glories, as I ought.

AGAMEMNON.

Daughter of Leda, guardian of my houſe,
Thy words are correſpondent to my abſence,
Of no ſmall length. With better grace my praiſe
Wou'd come from others: Sooth me not with ſtrains
Of adulation, as a girl; nor raiſe,
As to ſome proud barbaric king, that loves
Loud acclamations echoed from the mouths

Of proſtrate worſhippers, a clamorous welcome:
Nor ſpread the ſtreets with tapeſtry; 'tis invidious;
Theſe are the honours we ſhou'd pay the Gods.
For mortal man to tread on ornaments
Of rich embroid'ry——No: I dare not do it:
Reſpect me as a man, not as a God.
Why ſhould my foot pollute theſe veſts, that glow
With various tinctur'd radiance? My full fame
Swells high without it; and the temperate rule
Of cool diſcretion is the choiceſt gift
Of fav'ring Heav'n. Happy the man, whoſe life
Is ſpent in friendſhip's calm ſecurity.
Theſe ſober joys be mine, I aſk no more.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Do not thou thwart the purpoſe of my mind.

AGAMEMNON.

My mind, be well aſſur'd, ſhall not be tainted.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Haſt thou in fear made to the Gods this vow?

AGAMEMNON.

Free, from my ſoul in prudence have I ſaid it.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Had Priam's arms prevail'd, how had he acted?

AGAMEMNON.

On rich embroid'ry he had proudly trod.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Then dread not thou th' invidious tongues of men.

AGAMEMNON.

Yet has the popular voice much potency.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But the unenvied is not of the happy.

AGAMEMNON.

Ill ſuits it thy ſoft ſex to love contention.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

To yield ſometimes adds honour to the mighty.

AGAMEMNON.

Art thou ſo earneſt to obtain thy wiſh?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Let me prevail: indulge me with this conqueſt.

AGAMEMNON.

If ſuch thy will, haſte ſome one, from my feet
Unlooſe theſe high-bound buſkins, leſt ſome God
Look down indignant, if with them I preſs

Theſe veſts ſea-tinctur'd: Shame it were to ſpoil
With unclean tread their rich and coſtly texture.
Of theſe enough.——This ſtranger, let her find
A gentle treatment: from high Heav'n the God
Looks with an eye of favour on the victor
That bears his high ſtate meekly; for none wears
Of his free choice the yoke of ſlavery.
And ſhe, of many treaſures the prime flow'r
Selected by the troops, has follow'd me.
Well, ſince I yield me vanquiſh'd by thy voice,
I go, treading on purple, to my houſe.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Does not the ſea, and who ſhall drain it, yield
Unfailing ſtores of theſe rich tints, that glow
With purple radiance? Theſe this lordly houſe
Commands, bleſt with abundance, but to want
A ſtranger. I had vow'd his foot ſhou'd tread
On many a veſtment, when the victims bled,
The hallow'd pledge which this fond breaſt devis'd
For his return. For whilſt the vig'rous root
Maintains its graſp, the ſtately head ſhall riſe,
And with its waving foliage ſcreen the houſe

From

From the fierce dog-ſtar's firey peſtilence.
And on thy preſence at thy houſhold hearth,
E'en the cold winter feels a genial warmth.
But when from the unripe grape Jove draws the wine,
Cold is the houſe, tho' like the ſplendent ſun
The huſband's preſence chears it. Thou, O Jove,
Source of perfection, perfect all my vows,
And with thy influence favour my intents!

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

What may this mean? Along the ſkies
Why do theſe dreadfull portents roll?
Viſions of terror, ſpare my aching eyes,
Nor ſhake my ſad preſaging ſoul!
In accents dread, not tun'd in vain,
Why burſts the free, unbidden ſtrain?
Theſe are no phantoms of the night,
That vaniſh at the faithful light
Of ſtedfaſt confidence. Thou ſober pow'r,
Whither, ah, whither art thou gone?
For ſince the long-paſs'd hour,

When

When firſt for Troy the naval band
Unmoor'd their veſſels from the ſtrand,
Thou haſt not in my boſom fix'd thy throne.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

At length they come: theſe faithfull eyes
See them return'd to Greece again:
Yet, while the ſullen lyre in ſilence lies,
Erinnys wakes the mournfull ſtrain:
Her dreadfull pow'rs poſſeſs my ſoul,
And bid the untaught meaſures roll;
Swell in rude notes the diſmal lay,
And fright enchanting hope away;
Whilſt, ominous of ill, grim-viſag'd care
Inceſſant whirls my tortur'd heart.
Vain be each anxious fear!
Return, fair hope, thy ſeat reſume,
Diſpell this melancholy gloom,
And to my ſoul thy gladſome light impart!

STROPHE 2.

Ah me, what hope! This mortal ſtate
Nothing but cruel change can know.

Shou'd chearfull health our vig'rous ſteps await,
Enkindling all her roſeate glow;
Diſeaſe creeps on with ſilent pace,
And withers ev'ry blooming grace.
Proud ſails the bark; the freſh gales breath,
And daſh her on the rocks beneath.
In the rich houſe her treaſures plenty pours;
Comes ſloth, and from her well-pois'd ſling
Scatters the piled up ſtores.
Yet diſeaſe makes not all her prey:
Nor ſinks the bark beneath the ſea:
And famine ſees the heav'n-ſent harveſt ſpring.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

But when forth-welling from the wound
The purple-ſtreaming blood ſhall fall,
And the warm tide diſtain the reeking ground,
Who ſhall the vaniſh'd life recall?
Nor verſe, nor muſic's magic pow'r,
Nor the fam'd leech's boaſted lore;
Not that his art reſtor'd the dead,
Jove's thunder burſt upon his head.—

But

But that the Fates forbid, and chain my tongue,
My heart, at inſpiration's call,
Wou'd the rapt ſtrain prolong:
Now all is dark; it raves in vain,
And, as it pants with trembling pain,
Deſponding feels its firey tranſports fall.

CLYTEMNESTRA, CASSANDRA, CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou too, Caſſandra, enter; ſince high Jove,
Gracious to thee, hath plac'd thee in this houſe,
With many ſlaves to ſhare the common rites,
And deck the altar of the fav'ring God.
Come from that chariot, and let temperance rule
Thy lofty ſpirit: e'en Alcmena's ſon,
Sold as a ſlave, ſubmitted to the yoke
Perforce; and if neceſſity's hard hand
Hath ſunk thee to this fortune, our high rank,
With greatneſs long acquainted, knows to uſe
Its pow'r with gentleneſs: the low-born wretch,
That from his mean degree riſes at once

To unexpected riches, treats his ſlaves
With barbarous and unbounded inſolence.
From us thou wilt receive a juſter treatment.

CHORUS.

Theſe are plain truths: ſince in the toils of fate
Thou are inclos'd, ſubmit, if thou canſt brook
Submiſſion; haply I adviſe in vain.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

If that her language, like the twittering ſwallow's,
Be not all barbarous and unknown, my words
Within ſhall with perſuaſion move her mind.

CHORUS.

She ſpeaks what beſt beſeems thy preſent ſtate;
Follow, ſubmit, and leave that lofty car.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I have not leiſure here before the gates
T' attend on her; for at the inmoſt altar,
Blazing with ſacred fires, the victims ſtand
Devoted to the Gods for his return
So much beyond our hopes. If to comply
Thou form thy mind, delay not: if thy tongue

Knows not to ſound our language, let thy ſigns
Supply the place of words, ſpeak with thy hand.

CHORUS.

Of foreign birth ſhe underſtands us not;
But as new taken ſtruggles in the net.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

'Tis frenzy this, the impulſe of a mind
Diſorder'd; from a city lately taken
She comes, and knows not how to bear the curb,
'Till ſhe has ſpent her rage in bloody foam.
But I no more waſt words to be diſdain'd.

CHORUS.

My words, for much I pity her, ſhall bear
No mark of anger. Go, unhappy fair one,
Forſake thy chariot, unreluctant learn
To bear this new yoke of neceſſity.

CASSANDRA.

Woe, woe! O Earth! Apollo, O Apollo!

CHORUS.

Why with that voice of woe invoke Apollo?
Ill do theſe notes of grief accord with him.

CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA.

Woe, woe! O Earth! Apollo, O Apollo!

CHORUS.

Again her inauſpicious voice invokes
The God, whoſe ears are not attun'd to woe.

CASSANDRA.

Apollo, O Apollo, fatal leader,
Yet once more, God, thou leadeſt me to ruin!

CHORUS.

She ſeems prophetic of her own misfortunes,
Retaining, tho' a ſlave, the divine ſpirit.

CASSANDRA.

Apollo, O Apollo, fatal leader,
Ah, whither haſt thou led me? to what houſe?

CHORUS.

Is that unknown? Let me declare it then:
This is the royal manſion of th' Atridæ.

CASSANDRA.

It is a manſion hated by the Gods,
Conſcious to many' a foul and horrid deed;
A ſlaughter-houſe, that reeks with human gore.

CHORUS.

This ſtranger ſeems, like the nice-ſcented hound,
Quick in the trace of blood, which ſhe will find.

CASSANDRA.

Theſe are convincing proofs. Look there, look there,
Whilſt pity drops a tear, the children butcher'd,
The father feaſting on their roſted fleſh!

CHORUS.

Thy fame, prophetic virgin, we have heard;
We know thy ſkill; but wiſh no prophets now.

CASSANDRA.

Ye pow'rs of Heav'n, what does ſhe now deſign?
What new and dreadfull deed of woe is this?
What dreadfull ill deſigns ſhe in the houſe,
Intolerable, irreparable miſchief,
Whilſt far ſhe ſends the ſuccouring pow'r away?

CHORUS.

Theſe prophecies ſurpaſs my apprehenſion:
The firſt I knew, they echo thro' the city.

CASSANDRA.

Ah daring wretch, doſt thou atchieve this deed,

Thus

Thus in the bath the partner of thy bed
Refreſhing? How ſhall I relate th' event?
Yet ſpeedy ſhall it be. E'en now advanc'd
Hand above hand extended threatens high.

CHORUS.

I comprehend her not; her words are dark,
Perplexing me like abſtruſe oracles.

CASSANDRA.

Ha! What is this, that I ſee here before me?
Is it the net of hell? Or rather her's,
Who ſhares the bed, and plans the murderous deed.
Let diſcord, whoſe inſatiable rage
Purſues this race, howl thro' the royal rooms
Againſt the victim deſtin'd to deſtruction.

CHORUS.

What Fury doſt thou call within this houſe
To hold her orgies? The dread invocation
Appalls me; to my heart the purple drops
Flow back; a deathlike miſt covers my eyes,
With expectation of ſome ſudden ruin.

CASSANDRA.

See, ſee there: from the heifer keep the bull!—

O'er

O'er his black brows ſhe throws th' entangling veſt,
And ſmites him with her huge two-handed engine.
He falls, amidſt the cleanſing laver falls:
I tell thee of the bath, the treach'rous bath.

CHORUS.

T' unfold th' obſcure oracles of Heav'n
Is not my boaſt; beneath the ſhadowing veil
Misfortune lies: When did th' inquirer learn
From the dark ſentence an event of joy?
From time's firſt records the diviner's voice
Gives the ſad heart a ſenſe of miſery.

CASSANDRA.

Ah me unhappy? Wretched, wretched fate!
For my own ſufferings join'd call forth theſe wailings.
Why haſt thou brought me hither? Wretched me!
Is it for this, that I may die with him?

CHORUS.

This is the frenzy of a mind poſſeſs'd
With wildeſt ravings. Thy own woes thou waileſt
In mournfull melody; like the ſweet bird,
That darkling pours her never-ceaſing plaint;
And for her Atys, her loſt Atys, waſts

In

In ſweeteſt woe her melancholy life.

CASSANDRA.

Ah me! the fortune of the nightingale
Is to be envied: on her light-pois'd plumes
She wings at will her eaſy way, nor knows
The anguiſh of a tear, whilſt o'er my head
Th' impending ſword threatens the fatal wound.

CHORUS.

Whence is this violent, this wild preſage
Of ill? Thy fears are vain; yet with a voice
That terrifies, tho' ſweet, aloud thou ſpeakeſt
Thy ſorrows. Whence haſt thou deriv'd theſe omens,
Thus deeply mark'd with characters of death?

CASSANDRA.

Alas the bed, the bridal bed of Paris,
Deſtructive to his friends! Paternal ſtream,
Scamander, on thy banks with careleſs ſteps
My childhood ſtray'd: but now methinks I go,
Alas, how ſoon! to propheſy around
Cocytus, and the banks of Acheron!

CHORUS.

Perſpicuous this, and clear! the new-born babe

Might

Might comprehend it: but thy piercing griefs,
Bewailing thus the miſeries of thy fate,
Strike deep; they wound me to my very ſoul.

CASSANDRA.

Ah my poor country, my poor bleeding country,
Fall'n, fall'n for ever! And you, ſacred altars,
That blaz'd before my father's towred palace,
Not all your victims cou'd avert your doom!
And on the earth ſoon ſhall my warm blood flow.

CHORUS.

This is conſiſtent with thy former ravings.
Or does ſome God indeed incumbent preſs
Thy ſoul, and modulate thy voice to utter
Theſe lamentable notes of woe and death?
What the event ſhall be, exceeds my knowledge.

CASSANDRA.

The oracle no more ſhall ſhroud its viſage
Beneath a veil, as a new bride that bluſhes
To meet the gazing eye; but like the ſun,
When with his orient ray he gilds the eaſt,
Shall burſt upon you in a flood of light,
Diſcloſing deeds of deeper dread. Away,

Ye

Ye myſtic coverings! And you, reverend men,
Bear witneſs to me, that with ſteddy ſtep
I trace foul deeds that ſmell above the earth.
For never ſhall that band, whoſe yelling notes
In diſmal accord pierce th' affrighted ear,
Forſake this houſe. The genius of the feaſt,
Drunk with the blood of men, and fir'd from thence
To bolder daring, ranges thro' the rooms
Link'd with his kindred Furies: theſe poſſeſs
The manſion, and in horrid meaſures chaunt
The firſt baſe deed; recording with abhorrence
Th' adulterous luſt, that ſtain'd a brother's bed.
What, like a ſkillfull archer, have I lodg'd
My arrow in the mark? No trifling this,
T' alarm you with falſe ſounds. But ſwear to me,
In ſolemn atteſtation, that I know,
And ſpeak the old offences of this houſe.

CHORUS.

In ſuch a rooted ill what healing pow'r
Reſides there in an oath? But much I marvel
That thou, the native of a foreign realm,

Of foreign tongue, canſt ſpeak our language freely,
As Greece had been thy conſtant reſidence.

CASSANDRA.

Apollo grac'd me with this ſkill. At firſt
The curb of modeſty was on my tongue.

CHORUS.

Did the God feel the force of young deſire?
In each gay breaſt eaſe fans the wanton flame.

CASSANDRA.

With all the fervor of impatient love
He ſtrove to gratify my utmoſt wiſh.

CHORUS.

And didſt thou liſten to his tempting lures?

CASSANDRA.

Firſt I aſſented, then deceiv'd the God.

CHORUS.

Waſt thou then fraught with theſe prophetic arts?

CASSANDRA.

E'en then I told my country all its woes.

CHORUS.

The anger of the God fell heavy on thee?

CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA.

My voice, for this offence, loſt all perſuaſion.

CHORUS.

To us it ſeems a voice of truth divine.

CASSANDRA.

Woe, woe is me! Again the furious pow'r
Swells in my lab'ring breaſt; again commands
My burſting voice; and what I ſpeak is Fate.—
Look, look, behold thoſe children.—There they ſit;
Such are the forms, that in the troubled night
Diſtract our ſleep.—By a friend's hands they died:
Are theſe the ties of blood?—See, in their hands
Their mangled limbs, horrid repaſt, they bear:
Th' invited father ſhares th' accurſed feaſt.
For this the ſluggard ſavage, that at eaſe
Rolls on his bed, nor rouſes from his lair,
'Gainſt my returning lord, for I muſt wear
The yoke of ſlavery, plans the dark deſign
Of death. Ah me! the chieftain of the fleet,
The vanquiſher of Troy, but little knows
What the ſmooth tongue of miſchief, filed to words
Of glozing courteſy, with Fate her friend,

Like Ate ranging in the dark can do
Calmly: ſuch deeds a woman dares: ſhe dares
Murder a man. What ſhall I call this miſchief?
An Amphiſbæna? or a Scylla rather,
That in the vex'd rocks holds her reſidence,
And meditates the mariner's deſtruction?
Mother of Hell, 'midſt friends enkindling diſcord
And hate implacable! With dreadfull daring
How did ſhe ſhout, as if the battle ſwerv'd?
Yet with feign'd joy ſhe welcomes his return.—
Theſe words may want perſuaſion. What of that?
What muſt come, will come: and e'er long with grief
Thou ſhalt confeſs my prophecies are true.

CHORUS.

Thyeſtes' bloody feaſt oft have I heard of,
Always with horror; and I tremble now
Hearing th' unaggravated truth. What elſe
She utters, leads my wand'ring thoughts aſtray
In wild uncertainty.

CASSANDRA.

Then mark me well,
Thou ſhalt behold the death of Agamemnon.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

To better omens tune that voice unbleſs'd,
Or in eternal ſilence be it ſunk.

CASSANDRA.

This is an ill no medicine can heal.

CHORUS.

Not if it happens: but avert it, Heav'n!

CASSANDRA.

To pray be thine; the murd'rous deed is theirs.

CHORUS.

What man dares perpetrate this dreadfull act?

CASSANDRA.

How widely doſt thou wander from my words?

CHORUS.

I heard not whoſe bold hand ſhou'd do the deed.

CASSANDRA.

Yet ſpeak I well the language of your Greece.

CHORUS.

The gift of Phœbus this; no trivial grace.

CASSANDRA.

Ah, what a ſudden flame comes ruſhing on me!
I burn, I burn. Apollo, O Apollo!

This

This lioneſs, that in a ſenſual ſty
Roll'd with the wolf, the generous lion abſent,
Will kill me. And the ſorcereſs, as ſhe brews
Her philtred cup, will drug it with my blood.
She glories, as againſt her huſband's life
She whets the axe, her vengeance falls on him
For that he came accompanied by me.——
Why do I longer wear theſe uſeleſs honours,
This laurel wand, and theſe prophetic wreaths?
Away; before I die I caſt you from me;
Lie there, and periſh; I am rid of you;
Or deck the ſplendid ruin of ſome other.
Apollo rends from me theſe ſacred veſtments,
Who ſaw me in his rich habiliments
Mock'd 'midſt my friends, doubtleſs without a cauſe.
When in opprobrious terms they jeer'd my ſkill,
And treated me as a poor vagrant wretch,
That told events from door to door for bread,
I bore it all: but now the prophet God,
That with his own arts grac'd me, ſinks me down
To this low ruin. As my father fell
Butcher'd e'en at the altar, like the victim's

My

My warm blood at the altar ſhall be ſhed:
Nor ſhall we die unhonour'd by the Gods.
He comes, dreadfull in puniſhment, the ſon
Of this bad mother, by her death t' avenge
His murder'd father: Diſtant tho' he roams,
An outcaſt and exile, by his friends
Fenc'd from theſe deeds of violence, he comes
In ſolemn vengeance for his father laid
Thus low.—But why for foreign miſeries
Does the tear darken in my eye, that ſaw
The fall of Ilium, and its haughty conq'rors
In righteous judgement thus receive their meed?
But forward now; I go to cloſe the ſcene,
Nor ſhrink from death. I have a vow in Heav'n:
And further I adjure theſe gates of Hell,
Well may the blow be aim'd, that whilſt my blood
Flows in a copious ſtream, I may not feel
The fierce, convulſive agonies of death;
But gently ſink, and cloſe my eyes in peace.

CHORUS.

Unhappy, in thy knowledge moſt unhappy,
Long have thy ſorrows flow'd. But if indeed

Thou

Thou doſt foreſee thy death, why, like the heifer
Led by an heav'nly impulſe, do thy ſteps
Advance thus boldly to the cruel altar?

CASSANDRA.

I cou'd not by delay eſcape my fate.

CHORUS.

Yet is there ſome advantage in delay.

CASSANDRA.

The day is come: by flight I ſhou'd gain little.

CHORUS.

Thy boldneſs adds to thy unhappineſs.

CASSANDRA.

None of the happy ſhuns his deſtin'd end.

CHORUS.

True; but to die with glory crowns our praiſe.

CASSANDRA.

So died my father, ſo his noble ſons.

CHORUS.

What may this mean? Why backward doſt thou ſtart?
Do thy own thoughts with horror ſtrike thy ſoul?

CASSANDRA.

The ſcent of blood and death breaths from this houſe.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

The victims now are bleeding at the altar.

CASSANDRA.

'Tis ſuch a ſmell as iſſues from the tomb.

CHORUS.

This is no Syrian odor in the houſe.

CASSANDRA.

Such tho' it be, I enter, to bewail
My fate, and Agamemnon's. To have liv'd,
Let it ſuffice. And think not, gen'rous ſtrangers,
Like the poor bird that flutters o'er the bough,
Thro' fear I linger. But my dying words
You will remember, when her blood ſhall flow
For mine, woman's for woman's: and the man's,
For his that falls by his accurſed wife.

CHORUS.

Thy fate, poor ſufferer, fills my eyes with tears.

CASSANDRA.

Yet once more let me raiſe my mournfull voice.
Thou Sun, whoſe riſing beams ſhall bleſs no more
Theſe cloſing eyes! You, whoſe vindictive rage
Hangs o'er my hated murderers, Oh avenge me,

Tho', a poor ſlave, I fall an eaſy prey!
This is the ſtate of man: in proſperous fortune
A ſhadow, paſſing light, throws to the ground
Joy's baſeleſs fabric: in adverſity
Comes malice with a ſpunge moiſten'd in gall,
And wipes each beauteous character away:
More than the firſt this melts my ſoul to pity.

CHORUS.

By nature man is form'd with boundleſs wiſhes
For proſperous fortune; and the great man's door
Stands ever open to that envied perſon,
On whom ſhe ſmiles: but enter not with words,
Like this poor ſufferer, of ſuch dreadfull import.
His arms the pow'rs of Heav'n have grac'd with conqueſt;
Troy's proud walls lie in duſt; and he returns
Crown'd by the Gods with glory: but if now
His blood muſt for the blood there ſhed atone,
If he muſt die for thoſe that died, too dearly
He buys his triumph. Who of mortal men
Hears this, and dares to think his ſtate ſecure?

AGAMEMNON, within.

Oh, I am wounded with a deadly blow.

SEMICHORUS.

SEMICHORUS.

Liſt, liſt. What cry is this of wounds and death?

AGAMEMNON.

Wounded again, Oh, baſely, baſely murder'd.

SEMICHORUS.

'Tis the king's cry; the dreadfull deed is doing.
What ſhall we do? What meaſures ſhall we form?

SEMICHORUS.

What if we ſpread th' alarm, and with our outcries
Call at the palace gates the citizens?

SEMICHORUS.

Nay rather ruſh we in, and prove the deed,
Whilſt the freſh blood is reeking on the ſword.

SEMICHORUS.

I readily concur; determine then;
For ſomething muſt be done, and inſtantly.

SEMICHORUS.

That's evident. This bloody prelude threatens
More deeds of violence and tyranny.

SEMICHORUS.

We linger: thoſe that tread the paths of honour,
Late tho' ſhe meets them, ſleep not in their taſk.

SEMICHORUS.

Perplexity and doubt diſtract my thoughts:
Deeds of high import aſk matureſt counſil.

SEMICHORUS.

Such are my thoughts, ſince fruitleſs were th' attempt
By all our pleas to raiſe the dead to life.

SEMICHORUS.

To ſave our wretched lives then ſhall we bow
To theſe imperious lords, theſe ſtains of honour?

SEMICHORUS.

That were a ſhame indeed: No: let us die;
Death is more welcome than ſuch tyranny.

SEMICHORUS.

Shall we then take theſe outcries, which we heard,
For proofs, and thence conclude the king is ſlain?

SEMICHORUS.

We ſhou'd be well aſſur'd e'er we pronounce:
To know, and to conjecture, differ widely.

SEMICHORUS.

There's reaſon in thy words. Beſt enter then,
And ſee what fate attends the ſon of Atreus.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

To many' a fair ſpeech ſuited to the times
If my words now be found at variance,
I ſhall not bluſh. For when the heart conceives
Thoughts of deep vengeance on a foe, what means
T' atchieve the deed more certain, than to wear
The form of friendſhip, and with circling wiles
Incloſe him in th' unſuperable net?
This was no haſty, raſh-conceiv'd deſign;
But form'd with deep, premeditated thought,
Incens'd with wrongs; and often have I ſtood,
T' aſſay the execution, where he fell;
And plan'd it ſo, for I with pride avow it,
He had no pow'r t' eſcape, or to reſiſt,
Entangled in the gorgeous robe, that ſhone
Fatally rich. I ſtruck him twice, and twice
He groan'd, then died. A third time as he lay
I gored him with a wound, a gratefull preſent
To the ſtern God, that in the realms below
Reigns o'er the dead: there let him take his ſeat.
He lay; and ſpouting from his wounds a ſtream

Of

Of blood, bedew'd me with theſe crimſon drops.
I glory in them, like the genial earth,
When the warm ſhow'rs of Heav'n deſcend, and wake
The flowrets to unfold their vermeil leaves.
Come then, ye reverend ſenators of Argos,
Joy with me, if your hearts be tun'd to joy;
And ſuch I wiſh them. Were it decent now
To pour libations o'er the dead, with juſtice
It might be done; for his injurious pride
Fill'd for this houſe the cup of deſolation,
Fated himſelf to drain it to the dregs.

CHORUS.

We are aſtoniſh'd at thy daring words,
Thus vaunting o'er the ruins of thy huſband.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Me, like a witleſs woman, wou'dſt thou fright?
I tell thee, my firm ſoul diſdains to fear.
Be thou diſpos'd t' applaud, or cenſure me,
I reck it not: there Agamemnon lies,
My huſband, ſlaughter'd by this hand: I dare
Avow his death, and juſtify the deed.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

What poiſon hath the balefull-teeming earth,
Or the chaf'd billows of the foamy ſea,
Giv'n thee for food, or mingled in thy cup,
To work thee to this frenzy? Thy curs'd hand
Hath ſtruck, hath ſlain. For this thy country's wrath
Shall in juſt vengeance burſt upon thy head,
And with abhorrence drive thee from the city.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And doſt thou now denounce upon my head
Vengeance, and hate, and exile? 'Gainſt this man
Urging no charge? Yet he without remorſe,
As if a lamb that wanton'd in his paſtures
Were doom'd to bleed, cou'd ſacrifice his daughter,
For whoſe dear ſake I felt a mother's pains,
T' appeaſe the winds of Thrace. Shou'd not thy voice
Adjudge this man to exile, in juſt vengeance
For ſuch unholy deeds? Scarce haſt thou heard
What I have done, but ſentence is pronounc'd,
And that with rigor too. But mark me well,
I boldly tell thee that I bear a ſoul
Prepar'd for either fortune: if thy hand

Be

Be ſtronger, uſe thy pow'r: but if the Gods
Proſper my cauſe, be thou aſſur'd, old man,
Thou ſhalt be taught a leſſon of diſcretion.

CHORUS.

Aſpiring are thy thoughts, and thy proud vaunts
Swell with diſdain; e'en yet thy madding mind
Is drunk with ſlaughter; with a ſavage grace
The thick blood ſtains thine eye. But ſoon thy friends
Faithleſs ſhall ſhrink from thy unſhelter'd ſide,
And leave thee to juſt vengeance, blow for blow.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hear then this ſolemn oath: By that revenge,
Which for my daughter I have greatly taken;
By the dread pow'rs of Ate and Erinnys,
To whom my hand devoted him a victim,
Without a thought of fear I range theſe rooms,
Whilſt preſent to my aid Ægiſthus ſtands,
As he hath ſtood, guarding my ſocial hearth:
He is my ſhield, my ſtrength, my confidence.
Here lies my baſe betrayer, who at Troy
Cou'd revel in the arms of each Chryſeis;
He, and his captive minion; ſhe that mark'd

Portents

Portents and prodigies, and with ominous tongue
Preſag'd the Fates; a wanton harlotry,
True to the rower's benches: their juſt meed
Have they receiv'd. See where he lies; and ſhe,
That like the ſwan warbled her dying notes,
His paranymph lies with him, to my bed
Leaving the darling object of my wiſhes.

CHORUS.

No ſlow-conſuming pains, to torture us
Fix'd to the groaning couch, await us now;
But Fate comes ruſhing on, and brings the ſleep
That wakes no more. There lies the king, whoſe virtues
Were truly royal. In a woman's cauſe
He ſuffer'd much; and by a woman periſh'd.
Ah fatal Helen! in the fields of Troy
How many has thy guilt, thy guilt alone,
Stretch'd in the duſt? But now by murd'rous hands
Haſt thou ſluic'd out this rich and noble blood,
Whoſe foul ſtains never can be purg'd. This ruin
Hath diſcord, raging in the houſe, effected.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Wiſh not for death; nor bow beneath thy griefs;

Nor turn thy rage on Helen, as if ſhe
Had drench'd the fields with blood, as ſhe alone
Fatal to Greece had caus'd theſe dreadfull ills.

CHORUS.

Tremendous fiend, that breatheſt thro' this houſe
Thy balefull ſpirit, and with equal daring
Haſt ſteel'd theſe royal ſiſters to fierce deeds
That rend my ſoul, now, like the balefull raven,
Incumbent o'er the body doſt thou joy
T' affright us with thy harſh and diſſonant notes!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

There's ſenſe in this: now haſt thou touch'd the key,
Rouſing the Fury that from ſire to ſon
Hath bade the ſtream of blood, firſt pour'd by her,
Deſcend: one ſanguine tide ſcarce roll'd away,
Another flows in terrible ſucceſſion.

CHORUS.

And doſt thou glory in theſe deeds of death,
This vengeance of the Fury? Thus to pride thee
In ruin, and the havoc of thy houſe,
Becomes the ill. Ah! 'tis an higher pow'r,
That thus ordains; we ſee the hand of Jove,

Whoſe

Whoſe will directs the fate of mortal man.
My king, my royal lord, what words can ſhow
My grief, my reverence for thy princely virtues!
Art thou thus fall'n, caught in a cobweb ſnare,
By impious murder breathing out thy life?
Art thou thus fall'n, Ah the diſloyal bed!
Secretly ſlaughter'd by a treach'rous hand?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou ſay'ſt, and ſay'ſt aloud, I did this deed:
Say not that I, that Agamemnon's wife,
Did it: the Fury, fatal to this houſe,
In vengeance for Thyeſtes' horrid feaſt,
Aſſum'd this form, and with her antient rage
Hath for the children ſacrific'd the man.

CHORUS.

That thou art guiltleſs of this blood, what proof,
What witneſs?—From the father, in his cauſe,
Riſe an avenger! Stain'd with the dark ſtreams
Of kindred blood fierce waves the bick'ring ſword,
And points the ruthleſs boy to deeds of horror.—
My king, my royal lord, what words can ſhow
My grief, my reverence for thy princely virtues!

Art thou thus fall'n, caught in a cobweb ſnare,
By impious murder breathing out thy life?
Art thou thus fall'n, Ah the diſloyal bed!
Secretly ſlaughter'd by a treach'rous hand?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

No: of his death far otherwiſe I deem,
Nothing diſloyal. Nor with ſecret guile
Wrought he his murd'rous miſchiefs on this houſe.
For my ſweet flowret, opening from his ſtem,
My Iphigenia, my lamented child,
Whom he unjuſtly ſlew, he juſtly died.
Nor let him glory in the ſhades below;
For as he taught his ſword to thirſt for blood,
So by the thirſty ſword his blood was ſhed.

CHORUS.

Perplex'd and troubled in my anxious thought,
Amidſt the ruins of this houſe, deſpair
Hangs heavy on me. Drop by drop no more
Deſcends the ſhow'r of blood; but the wild ſtorm
In one red torrent ſhakes the ſolid walls;
Whilſt vengeance, ranging thro' the deathfull ſcene,
For further miſchief whets her fatal ſword.

SEMICHORUS.

SEMICHORUS.

O Earth, that I had reſted in thy boſom,
E'er I had ſeen him lodg'd with thee, and ſhrunk
To the brief compaſs of a ſilver urn!
Who ſhall attend the rites of ſepulture?
Who ſhall lament him? Thou, whoſe hand has ſhed
Thy huſband's blood, wilt thou dare raiſe the voice
Of mourning o'er him? Thy unhallow'd hand
Renders theſe honours, ſhou'd they come from thee,
Unwelcome to his ſhade. What faithfull tongue,
Fond to recount his great and godlike acts,
Shall ſteep in tears his funeral eulogy?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This care concerns not thee: by us he fell,
By us he died; and we will bury him
With no domeſtic grief. But Iphigenia,
His daughter, as is meet, jocund and blythe
Shall meet him on the banks of that ſad ſtream,
The flood of ſorrow, and with filial duty
Hang fondling on her father's neck, and kiſs him.

CHORUS.

Thus inſult treads on inſult. Of theſe things

Hard

Hard is it to decide. Th' infected ſtain
Communicates th' infection; murder calls
For blood; and outrage on th' injurious head,
At Jove's appointed time, draws outrage down.
Thus, by the laws of nature, ſon ſucceeds
To ſire; and who ſhall drive him from the houſe?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Theſe are the oracles of truth. But hear me;
It likes me to the genius of the race
Of Pliſthenes to ſwear that what is paſt,
Tho' poor the ſatisfaction, bounds my wiſhes.
Hither he comes no more: No, let him ſtain
Some other houſe with gore. For me, ſome poor,
Some ſcanty pittance of the goods contents me,
Well ſatisfied that from this houſe I've driven
Theſe frentic Furies red with kindred blood.

ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

ÆGISTHUS.

Hail to this joyfull day, whoſe welcome light
Brings vengeance! Now I know that the juſt Gods
Look from their ſkies, and puniſh impious mortals,

Seeing

Seeing this man roll'd in the blood-wove woof,
The tiſſue of the Furies, grateſull ſight,
And ſuffering for his father's fraudfull crimes.
Atreus, his father, ſovereign of this land,
Brooking no rival in his pow'r, drove out
My father and his brother, poor Thyeſtes,
A wretched exile: from his country far
He wander'd; but at length return'd, and ſtood
A ſuppliant before the houſehold Gods,
Secure in their protection that his blood
Shou'd not diſtain the pavement. This man's father,
The ſacrilegious Atreus, with more ſhow
Of courteſy than friendſhip, ſpread the feaſt,
Devoting, ſuch the fair pretence, the day
To hoſpitality and genial mirth:
Then to my father in that feaſt ſerv'd up
The fleſh of his own ſons: their hands and feet
Hack'd off before, their undiſtinguiſh'd parts
He eat, without ſuſpicion eat, a food
Deſtructive to the race. But when he knew
Th' unhallow'd deed, he rais'd a mournfull cry,
And ſtarting up with horror ſpurn'd to the' ground

The

The barb'rous banquet, utt'ring many' a curſe
Of deepeſt vengeance on the houſe of Pelops.
Thus periſh'd all the race of Pliſthenes.
And for this cauſe thou ſeeſt him fall'n, his death
With juſtice I devis'd; for me he chac'd,
The thirteenth ſon, an infant in my cradle,
With my unhappy father. Nurs'd abroad,
Vengeance led back my ſteps, and taught my hand
From far to reach him. All this plan of ruin
Was mine, reckleſs of what enſues; e'en death
Were glorious, now he lies caught in my vengeance.

CHORUS.

T' imbitter ills with inſult, this, Ægiſthus,
I praiſe not. Thou, of thine own free accord,
Haſt ſlain this man; ſuch is thy boaſt; this plan
Of ruin, which we mourn, is thine alone.
But be thou well aſſur'd thou ſhalt not 'ſcape,
When, rous'd to juſtice, the avenging people
Shall hurl their ſtones with curſes on thy head.

ÆGISTHUS.

From thee, who laboureſt at the loweſt oar,
This language, and to him that holds the helm!

Thou

Thou ſhalt be taught, old man, what at thy age
Is an hard leſſon, prudence. Chains and hunger,
Beſides the load of age, have ſovereign virtue
To phyſic the proud heart. Behold this ſight;
Does it not ope thine eyes? Reſt quiet then;
Contend not with the ſtrong; there's danger in it.

CHORUS.

And cou'd thy ſofter ſex, whilſt the rough war
Demands its chieftain, violate his bed,
And on his firſt return contrive his death?

ÆGISTHUS.

No more: this ſounds th' alarm to rude complaints.
The voice of Orpheus with its ſoothing notes
Attracted e'en the ſavage; whilſt thy yells
To rage inflame the gentle: but take heed;
Dungeons and chains may teach thee moderation.

CHORUS.

Shalt thou reign king in Argos? Thou, whoſe ſoul
Plotted this murder; whilſt thy coward hand
Shrunk back, nor dared to execute the deed?

ÆGISTHUS.

Wiles and deceit are female qualities:

The memory of my antient enmity
Had wak'd ſuſpicion. Maſter of his treaſures,
Be it my next attempt to gain the people:
Whome'er I find unwilling to ſubmit,
Him, like an high-fed and unruly horſe
Reluctant to the harneſs, rigor ſoon
Shall tame: confinement, and her meagre comrade
Keen hunger, will abate his firey mettle.

CHORUS.

Did not the baſeneſs of thy coward ſoul
Unman thee to this murder, that a woman,
Shame to her country and her country's Gods,
Muſt dare the horrid deed? But when Oreſtes,
Where'er he breaths the vital air, returns,
Good fortune be his guide, ſhall not his hand
Take a bold vengeance in the death of both?

ÆGISTHUS.

Such ſince thy thoughts and words, ſoon ſhalt thou feel——

CHORUS.

Help, ho! ſoldiers and friends; the danger's near;
Help, ho! advance in haſte with your drawn ſwords!

ÆGISTHUS.

ÆGISTHUS.

My ſword is drawn: Ægiſthus dares to die.

CHORUS.

Prophetic be thy words! We hail the omen.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Deareſt of men, do not heap ills on ills:
I wiſh not to exaſperate, but to heal
Misfortunes paſt: enough is giv'n to vengeance;
Let no more blood be ſpilt. Go then, old men,
Each to your homes; go, whilſt ye may, in peace.
What hath been done the rigor of the times
Compell'd, and hard neceſſity; the weight
Of theſe afflictions, grievous as they are,
By too ſevere a doom falls on our heads.
Diſdain not to be taught, tho' by a woman.

ÆGISTHUS.

Ay; but to hear this vain, tongue-doughty babler,
Laviſh of ſpeech that tempts to deſperate deeds,
It moves me from the firmneſs of my temper.

CHORUS.

An Argive ſcorns to fawn on guilty greatneſs.

ÆGISTHUS.

My vengeance ſhall o'ertake thee at the laſt.

CHORUS.

Not if juſt Heav'n ſhall guide Oreſtes hither.

ÆGISTHUS.

An exile, I well know, feeds on vain hopes.

CHORUS.

Go on then, gorge with blood; thou haſt the means.

ÆGISTHUS.

This folly, be aſſur'd, ſhall coſt thee dear.

CHORUS.

The craven, in her preſence, rears his creſt.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Slight men, regard them not; but let us enter,
Aſſume our ſtate, and order all things well.

# THE

# CHOEPHORÆ.

# СНОЕЬНОКЕ

ДНЕ

# The CHOEPHORÆ.

THE Chorus in the former play, with a dignity and firmneſs becoming ſenators of Argos, had expreſſed their abhorrence of the murder of Agamemnon even to the face of Clytemneſtra and Ægiſthus, and threatened them with the anger of the Gods and the vengeance of Oreſtes: this is here executed.

The characters of Oreſtes and Electra are finely ſupported. A pious reſentment of the murder of his father, a conſciouſneſs of his own high rank, and a juſt indignation at the injuries he had received from the murderers, a generous deſire to deliver his country from the tyranny of theſe uſurpers, and above all the expreſs command of Apollo, with a promiſe of his protection if he obeyed, and a denunciation of the ſevereſt puniſhments ſhould he dare to diſobey, incited Oreſtes to this deed: he is accordingly drawn as a man of a brave and daring ſpirit, touched with the higheſt ſenſe of honour, and the moſt religious reverence of the Gods: in ſuch a character there could be nothing ſavage and ferocious; and we are pleaſed to find him deeply ſenſible of the horror of the deed which he was obliged to perpetrate, and averſe to plunge his ſword into the breaſt of his mother. "Electra's "character (in the words of the critic) is that of a fierce and de- "termined, but withall of a generous and virtuous woman. Her "motives to revenge were, principally, a ſtrong ſenſe of juſtice,

" and ſuperior affection for a father; not a rooted, unnatural " averſion to a mother. She acted, as appears, not from the per- " turbation of a tumultuous revenge, but from a fixed abhorrence " of wrong, and a virtuous ſenſe of duty." Conſiſtently with this character, when ſhe had given Oreſtes a ſpirited account of their father's murder, which drew him to declare his reſolution to revenge it, ſhowing at the ſame time ſome ſign of remorſe, ſhe adds a ſhort relation of the barbarous indignities offered to the dead body; a deed of horror which, ſhe knew, would ſhock his ſoul. She had ſeen her father murdered, his body mangled, and buried without its honours; her brother, whom ſhe loved with the tendereſt affection, deprived of his throne, and exiled from his country; her mother in the arms of Ægiſthus abandoning herſelf to her looſe and infamous pleaſures; ſhe was herſelf continually expoſed to the inſults and barbarous treatment of this ungentle mother; what wonder then that a ſpirit naturally lofty and ſenſible ſhould catch fire at theſe injuries, contract a wolfiſh fierceneſs, as ſhe expreſſes it, and urge her brother to ſacrifice theſe proud oppreſſors to juſtice and revenge? But the poet, with great regard to decorum, removes her from the ſcene before the dreadfull deed is to be committed: with regard to his management of the cataſtrophe, nothing could be more judicious. Oreſtes, who had ruſhed on Ægiſthus with the fury of a tyger, in the preſence of his mother feels himſelf under the reſtraint of filial reverence, and confeſſes his reluctance to ſhed her blood; till Pylades animates

mates him with a ſentence as ſolemn as the Delphic Oracle; which finely marks the fatal blow as an act of neceſſary juſtice, not of ruffian violence. Even the Chorus, who enter warmly into the intereſts of Electra and Oreſtes, and had fired him to revenge by every argument of duty, juſtice, law, and honour; who had wiſhed to hear the dying groans of the guilty tyrants, and to echo them back in notes as diſmal, after the deed is done, reaſſume the ſofter ſentiments of humanity, and lament their fate. The remorſe and madneſs of Oreſtes is touched in the fineſt manner. Theſe indeed are but ſketches, but they are the ſketches of a great maſter: a ſucceeding poet had the ſkill to give them their finiſhing, and heightened them with the warmeſt glow of colouring. The ſpirit of Æſchylus ſhines thro' this tragedy; but a certain ſoftening of grief hangs over it, and gives it an air of ſolemn magnificence.

The ſcene of this tragedy, as of the former, is at Argos before the royal palace. Oreſtes, according to the cuſtom of antient times, offering his hair on the tomb of his father, ſees a train of females advancing from the houſe, and *bringing libations to the tomb;* from whence the play receives its name. The action is afterwards removed to the area before the palace. This requires no change of ſcene.

# Perſons of the Drama.

ORESTES.

PYLADES.

ELECTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

SERVANTS.

CHORUS of TROJAN DAMES.

# Perſons of the Drama.

ORESTES.

PYLADES.

ELECTRA.

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SERVANTS.

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## Persons of the Drama.

ORESTES.

PYLADES.

ELECTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

SERVANTS.

CHORUS of Trojan Dames.

# THE CHOEPHORÆ.

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORESTES.

O THOU, that to the regions of the dead
Beareſt thy father's high beheſts, O hear,
Hear, Mercury, thy ſupplicant, protect,
And ſave me; for I come, from exile come,
Reviſiting my country!—Thou, dread ſhade,
At whoſe high tomb I bow, ſhade of my father,
Hear me, O hear! To thee theſe criſped locks,
Once ſacred to the nurture-giving ſtream

Of

Of Inachus, in the' anguiſh of my ſoul
I now devote.—But what are theſe, this train
Of females in the ſable garb of woe
Decently habited? Whence ſpring their ſorrows?
Does ſome new ruin lord it in the houſe?
Or haply, if I deem aright, they bring
Oblations to my father's ſhade, to ſooth
The mighty dead. It muſt be ſo; for, ſee,
Electra is among them, my poor ſiſter,
Præ-eminent in grief.——Almighty Jove,
O give me to revenge my father's death,
And ſhield me with thy favour! Pylades,
Stand we apart conceal'd, that I may learn
What leads this train of ſuppliant females hither.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

This ſadly-penſive train to lead,
With hallow'd rites to ſooth the dead,
To bear theſe off'rings to his ſhrine,
The melancholy taſk is mine.

And,

And, as from yon' proud walls I take my way,
My cheeks, with many' a ſounding blow
Beat by theſe hands, in crimſon glow,
Whilſt my poor heart to anguiſh ſinks a prey:
And the fair texture of this veſt,
That decent o'er my ſwelling boſom roll'd,
My griefs thro' ev'ry waving fold
Have rent, and bared my bleeding breaſt.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

For in the ſtill and midnight hour,
When darkneſs aids his hideous pow'r,
Affright, that breaths his vengeance deep,
Haunts with wild dreams the troubled ſleep,
That freeze the blood, and raiſe the briſtling hair:
Grim ſpectre! he with horrid tread
Stalk'd around the curtain'd bed,
And rais'd a yell that pierc'd the tortur'd ear.
Aghaſt the heav'n-taught prophet ſtood;
The dead, he cries, the angry dead around
Theſe dreadfull notes of vengeance ſound,
Dreadfull to thoſe that ſhed their blood.

STROPHE 2.

With ſoul-ſubduing fear appall'd
Me this unholy woman call'd,
To bear theſe gifts, this train to lead,
And ſooth to peace the mighty dead.
But will theſe gifts be gratefull to his ſhade?
O Earth, when once the guſhing blood
Hath on thy purple boſom flow'd,
What gratefull expiation ſhall be made?
Ill-fated houſe, thy maſter ſlain,
How are thy glories vaniſh'd! O'er thy walls
A joyleſs, ſunleſs darkneſs falls,
And horror holds his hatefull reign.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

Round him the blaze of greatneſs ſhone,
And dignity adorn'd his throne:
The people bow'd before their lord,
Awe-ſtruck, and his high ſtate ador'd.
Where now that reverend awe, that ſacred dread
Of majeſty? Succeſs, to thee,
As to a God, men bend the knee.
But juſtice haſtes t' avenge each impious deed;

Some

Some in day's clear and open light,
Some in the duſky evening's twilight ſhade,
Or by delay more furious made,
Some in the dreary gloom of night.

EPODE.

His blood, that ſunk upon the ground
A ſtiffen'd maſs of carnage lies,
Aloud for vengeance on his murderers cries:
Ate obeys the call; but ſlow
Delays, till dreary night incloſe them round,
Prepar'd to ſtrike a deeper blow.
Shall he, that foul with midnight rape
Pollutes the nuptial bed, eſcape?
Murder and luſt! Were all the ſtreams, that wind
Their mazy progreſs to the main,
To cleanſe this odious ſtain in one combin'd,
The ſtreams combin'd wou'd flow in vain.
Me, from my bleeding country torn,
Condemn'd the ſervile yoke to bear,
Bitter conſtraint and ſpirit-ſinking fear
Compell t' obey their proud commands;

Juſt, or unjuſt, perforce they muſt be born;
Captive, my life is in their hands:
Perforce my ſtruggling ſoul conceals its hate;
My veſt forbids the ſtarting tear to flow;
Mourning the mighty chief's unhappy fate
Silent I ſtand, and ſtiffen with my woe.

ELECTRA.

Ye captive females, to whoſe care this houſe
Owes what it has of order, ſince with me
You here are preſent on theſe ſuppliant rites
Attendant, ſhow, inſtruct me, as I pour
Theſe ſolemn off'rings on the tomb, what words
Of gracious potency ſhall I pronounce?
Or how invoke my father? Shall I ſay
"To her lov'd lord the loving wife hath ſent
"Theſe preſents?" Shame forbids: nor hath my tongue
Ought of addreſs, whilſt on my father's tomb
I offer theſe atonements. Shou'd I rather,
As nature prompts, entreat him to return
Like garlands to the ſenders, meet reward
For their ill deeds? Or with inglorious ſilence,

For

For ſo he periſh'd, on the thirſty earth
Pour theſe libations, then retire, like one
That in ſome worthleſs veſſel throws away
Something unclean, and caſts the veſſel with it,
Nor backwards turns her eyes. Inſtruct me, friends,
Adviſe me, for alike we hate this houſe;
Be open then; here you have none to fear.
The free eſcapes not fate, more than the wretch
That trembles at his proud lord's tyrannous hand.
If thou haſt ought of counſil, give it me.

CHORUS.

Since, as ſome hallow'd ſhrine, thy father's tomb
I reverence, at thy bidding I will ſpeak.

ELECTRA.

I charge thee, by that reverence, freely ſpeak.

CHORUS.

With theſe libations pour thy ardent vows
For bleſſings on the head of all his friends.

ELECTRA.

Whom by that honour'd title ſhall I name?

CHORUS.

Thyſelf the firſt, and all that hate Ægiſthus.

ELECTRA.

ELECTRA.

For thee and me then ſhall I pour theſe vows?

CHORUS.

To learn, and weigh this well, be thy concern.

ELECTRA.

Whom to this friendly number ſhall I add?

CHORUS.

Tho' diſtant far, remember poor Oreſtes.

ELECTRA.

That's well: I learn no little wiſdom from thee.

CHORUS.

Remember next the authors of his death.

ELECTRA.

What ſhou'd I ſay? Inſtruct my lack of knowledge.

CHORUS.

Pray that ſome God, or man, may come to them.

ELECTRA.

With what intent? To judge, or to avenge?

CHORUS.

Speak plainly, to repay them death for death.

ELECTRA.

And may this be with reverence to the Gods?

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

What hinders to requite a foe with ill?

ELECTRA, at the Tomb.

O thou, that to the realms beneath the earth
Guideſt the dead, be preſent, Mercury,
And tell me that the pow'rs, whoſe ſolemn ſway
Extends o'er thoſe dark regions, hear my vows;
Tell me that o'er my father's houſe they roll
Their awefull eyes, and o'er this earth, that bears
And foſters all, rich in their various fruits.
And thee, my father, pouring from this vaſe
Libations to thy ſhade, on thee I call,
O pity me, pity my dear Oreſtes,
That in this ſeat of kings our hands may hold
The golden reins of pow'r: for now oppreſs'd,
And harraſs'd by a mother's cruel hand,
Who for Ægiſthus, that contriv'd thy death,
Exchang'd her royal lord, He wanders far,
And I am treated as a ſlave: Oreſtes
From his poſſeſſions exil'd, they with pride
Wantonly revel in the wealth thy toils
Procur'd: O grant Oreſtes may return,

And

And fortune be his guide! Hear me, my father,
And grant me, more than e'er my mother knew,
The grace and bluſh of unſtain'd modeſty,
And a more holy hand! For us theſe vows;
But on our foes may thy avenger riſe
Demanding blood for blood. Theſe vows I breath
In dreadfull imprecations on their heads.
Be thou to us, my father, with the Gods,
This earth, and pow'rfull juſtice, be to us,
That breath this vital air, a guide to good.
With theſe libations ſuch the vows I offer.
Now let your ſorrows flow; attune the Pæan,
And ſooth his ſhade with ſolemn harmony.

CHORUS.

Swell the warbling voice of woe,
Loudly let the meaſures flow;
And ever and anon the ſorrowing tear
Trickling dew the hallow'd ground,
T' avert the ills we fear;
Whilſt on this ſepulchral mound
Her pious hands the pure libation ſhed,
T' atone the mighty dead.

Hear

Hear me, O hear me, awefull lord,
Thro' the dreary gloom ador'd!
Ha! Who is this? See, ſiſters, ſee,
Mark with what force he ſhakes his angry lance:
Comes he this ruin'd houſe to free?
So does ſome Thracian chief advance;
So Mars, when rous'd with war's alarms,
Radiant all his claſhing arms,
Rears high his flaming falchion to the blow,
And thunders on the foe.

ELECTRA.

'Tis finiſh'd; theſe libations to my father
The earth has drunk.—Thou awefull pow'r, that holdeſt
'Twixt this ætherial ſky and the dark realms
Beneath dread intercourſe, What may this mean?
'Tis all amazement. Share this wonder with me.

CHORUS.

Say what: my throbbing heart has caught th' alarm.

ELECTRA.

Plac'd on the tomb behold theſe criſped locks.

CHORUS.

Shorn from a man, or ſome high-boſom'd dame?

ELECTRA.

'Tis not hard taſk to form a ſtrong conjecture.

CHORUS.

Young tho' thou art, inform my riper age.

ELECTRA.

None here, myſelf excepted, cou'd devote
His locks. The mournfull off'ring ill becomes
Our enemies. Then the colour; mark it well;
'Tis the ſame ſhade.

CHORUS.

With whoſe? I burn to know.

ELECTRA.

With mine: Compare them: are they not much like?

CHORUS.

Are they a ſecret off'ring from Oreſtes?

ELECTRA.

Mark: they are very like his cluſtring locks.

CHORUS.

I marvel how he dared to venture hither.

ELECTRA.

Perchance he ſent this honour to his father.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Nor that leſs cauſe of ſorrow, if his foot
Muſt never preſs his native ſoil again.

ELECTRA.

A flood of grief o'erwhelms me, and my heart
Is pierc'd with anguiſh; from my eyes that view
Theſe locks, faſt fall the ceaſeleſs-ſtreaming tears,
Like wintry ſhow'rs. To whom beſides, that here
Inhabits, cou'd I think theſe locks belong?
Cou'd ſhe, who ſlew him, offer on his tomb
Her hair? Alas, her thoughts are impious all,
Such as a daughter dares not name. I deem,
With reaſon then I deem they graced the head
Of my Oreſtes, deareſt of mankind:
Why ſhou'd not I indulge the flatt'ring hope?
Ah, had they but a voice, cou'd they but ſpeak
That I no more might fluctuate with theſe doubts
Perplex'd and troubled; cou'd they plainly tell me
If they were ſhorn from a foe's hated head,
Or fondly mix their kindred griefs with mine,
A grace and honour to my father's tomb!
But to the Gods, that know what furious ſtorms

Burſt o'er me, like a ſhipwreck'd mariner,
I make appeal: if haply ought of ſafety
Remains, from this ſmall root the vig'rous trunk
May ſpread its ſhelt'ring branches.—Further mark
Th' impreſſion of theſe feet; they ſhow that two
Trod here; himſelf perchance and his attendant;
One of th' exact dimenſions with my own.
But all is anguiſh and perplexity.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ORESTES.

In other preſſures beg the fav'ring Gods
To hear thy vows, and ſhow'r their bleſſings on thee.

ELECTRA.

What bleſſing from them have I now obtain'd?

ORESTES.

Thou ſeeſt before thee whom but late thine eyes
Moſt wiſh'd to ſee.

ELECTRA.

And doſt thou know the name,
Which with fond joy my tongue delights to utter?

ORESTES.

ORESTES.

Thy fervent vows, I know, are for Oreſtes.

ELECTRA.

And of thoſe vows what have I yet obtain'd?

ORESTES.

I am Oreſtes: ſeek no firmer friend.

ELECTRA.

With wily trains thou wou'dſt enſnare me, ſtranger.

ORESTES.

Then ſhou'd I ſpread theſe trains againſt myſelf.

ELECTRA.

But thou wou'dſt mock me in my miſeries.

ORESTES.

To mock thy miſeries were t' inſult my own.

ELECTRA.

Am I indeed converſing with Oreſtes?

ORESTES.

Thou ſeeſt me preſent, yet art ſlow to know me.
When offer'd on the tomb thou ſaw'ſt theſe locks,
When with thy own th' impreſſions of my feet
Were meaſur'd, joy gave wings to expectation,
And imag'd me before thee. Mark theſe locks,

Shorn

Shorn from thy brother's head; obſerve them well,
Compare them with thy own. This tiſſue, view it,
The texture is thy own, the rich embroidery,
Thine are theſe figures, by thy curious hand
Imag'd in gold.—Let not thy joy tranſport thee:
Our neareſt friends are now our deadlieſt foes.

ELECTRA.

Thou deareſt pledge of this imperial houſe,
From thee my hopes, water'd with tears, aroſe:
Thy valour ſhall ſupport our righteous cauſe,
And vindicate the glories of thy father.
Pride of my ſoul, for my fond tongue muſt ſpeak,
The love my father ſhared, my mother ſhared,
Once ſhared, but juſtly now my ſoul abhors her,
And that poor victim my unhappy ſiſter,
Is center'd all in thee: thou art my father,
My mother, ſiſter, my ſupport, my glory,
My only aid: and Heav'n's great King ſhall proſper
Thy courage, and the juſtice of thy cauſe.

ORESTES.

Look down, great King of Heav'n, look down, behold
Theſe deeds of baſeneſs; ſee an orphan race

Reft of the parent eagle, that, inwreath'd
In the dire ſerpent's ſpiry volumes, periſh'd.
They, unprotected, feel th' oppreſſive pangs
Of famine, yet too weak to wing their flight,
And, like their parent, fill their neſt with prey.
We are the eagle's offspring, of our father
Depriv'd, and driv'n in exile from his houſe.
Before thy altars, loaded by his hand,
He bow'd with pious reverence: Shou'd thy will
Permit his young to periſh, who ſhall pay thee
Like coſtly honours? Shou'd the eagle's offspring
Be doom'd to periſh, who ſhall bear thy thunders,
Dread ſign of wrath awak'd on mortal man?
Nor will this empire, wither'd from its roots,
Adorn thy altars on the ſolemn day
With hallow'd victims. Save us then, protect us,
To all its former glories raiſe this houſe,
Whoſe ruin'd tow'rs ſeem bending to their fall.

CHORUS.

Ye generous offspring of this royal houſe,
And guardians of its honour, check your tranſports;
Leſt they are heard, and ſome incontinent tongue

Bear

Bear them to our bad rulers: may theſe eyes
Firſt ſee the dark wreaths of their funeral piles.

ORESTES.

The voice of Phœbus never ſhall deceive:
In dreadfull accents utter'd from his ſhrine
Aloud he charg'd me to defy the danger,
Threat'ning to rack my ſoul with keeneſt tortures,
Shou'd I forbear t' avenge my father's death
With equal retribution on his murderer,
That proudly riots in my waſted wealth.
This honour'd ſhade he charg'd me to avenge,
Tho' round enclos'd with evils; to the dead
This triumph o'er their foes the voice declar'd
A lenient joy; to us denouncing ills,
Corroſive leproſies with rankling tooth
To knaw our fleſh, and taint our healthfull bodies
With ulcerous foulneſs, changing theſe freſh locks
T' untimely white; with trains of heavier woes
Rais'd by the Furies from my father's blood,
Who in the realms of night ſees this, and bends
His gloomy brows. For the dark ſhafts, that fly
From thoſe beneath ſlain by the kindred hand

Of

Of villain baſeneſs, frenzy, and vain fear
That trembles at the ſhadows of the night,
Rouſe, ſting, and drive the vice-polluted wretch
With brazen ſcourges tortur'd thro' the city.
He from the friendly bowl, the hallow'd goblet,
The ſocial intercourſe, the incens'd altar
Is chas'd, condemn'd to bear the ſecret pangs
Of inly-knawing guilt: meanwhile the fiends,
Hatred and infamy, purſue his ſteps,
And drag him to an execrable death.
Such was the voice of Phœbus, and demands
My prompt obedience. Cou'd my ſoul refuſe
T' obey the awefull mandate, yet the deed
Muſt be accompliſh'd; many urgencies
Conſpire; the charges of the Gods, the grief
That wounds me for my father, the fierce pangs
Of penury compell me; and the ſhame,
That burns the generous ſoul, to leave my country,
And all thoſe heroes glorious thro' the world,
Whoſe conquering arms laid Troy's proud tow'rs in duſt,
Slaves to two women; for his ſoul is woman:
If not, th' occaſion ſoon will prove his ſpirit.

CHORUS.

And you, tremendous Deſtinies, whoſe pow'r
Is ratified by Jove, mark the firm courſe
Of juſtice, and by that direct th' event.
Be th' inſults of the hoſtile tongue repaid
With hoſtile inſults: Juſtice calls aloud,
Demanding vengeance: let the mur'drous blow
Requite the murd'rous blow. The ſolemn voice,
Requiring that oppreſſive force ſhou'd feel
Oppreſſive force, is ſanctified by age.

ORESTES.

O thou much injur'd ſhade, my ſuffering father,
In thy dear cauſe what ſhall I ſay, what do,
Guided by fortune hither? Where, O where
Is thy couch ſpread? Our light is ſhaded o'er
With darkneſs deep as thine; our youthfull graces,
That in this royal houſe once bloom'd with hope
Fair opening, ſhrink at the rough blaſt of ſorrow.

CHORUS.

No: the devouring flames, my ſon, that waſte
The body of the dead, touch not the ſoul;
That lives, and knows its deſtin'd hour to ſhow

Its wrath: yet for the dead our ſorrows riſe.
Mean while th' oppreſſor ſtands a ſignal mark;
And the juſt griefs of fathers and of ſons
With reſtleſs ſearch trace all around for vengeance.

ELECTRA.

Hear me too, O my father; in thoſe griefs
Which at thy ſepulchre thy children pour,
I have a mournfull part. Thy tomb receives
Alike the ſuppliant and the exile. Which,
Ah, which of theſe is well? Which without evils?
No lenient hand can eaſe our miſeries.

CHORUS.

Yet may the God, that utter'd from the ſhrine
His awefull voice, from theſe raiſe other ſounds
More pleaſing; and for theſe ſepulchral notes,
Notes ſteep'd in tears, thro' all theſe royal rooms
The voice of joy may ring, and hail their lord
Return'd to bleſs them with his kind protection.

ELECTRA.

Yet, O my father, hadſt thou greatly fallen
Beneath the walls of Troy, pierc'd by the ſpear
Of ſome bold Lycian, leaving to thy houſe

Thy glory, gracing with illuſtrious ſplendor
Thy children's ſteps, on that barbaric coaſt
The high-rais'd tomb had dignify'd thy duſt,
And ſooth'd our ſorrows. In the realms beneath
Thy friendly ſhade, amongſt the friendly ſhades
That fell with honour there, had held its ſtate
Majeſtic and rever'd, a king, next thoſe
Whoſe awefull pow'r thoſe darkſome realms obey.
For to thy laſt of life thou waſt a king,
The golden reins of empire graced thy hands,
And thy ſtrong ſceptre ruled a willing people.
But in the fields of Troy thou didſt not fall,
Nor is thy tomb beſide Scamander's ſtream
With thoſe that periſh'd by the hoſtile ſpear.
But, Oh, I wiſh that they, by whom he fell,
Had firſt ſo fall'n; and he, tho' diſtant far,
Had heard the rumour of their bloody fate,
Secure himſelf, nor tangled in their ſnares.

CHORUS.

Treaſures of gold, my child, are poor to this:
Thy words are greater than the greateſt fortune,
And all her favours: from thy grief they ſpring.

But

But from this ſcourge a double claſh is heard;
One from th' aſſiſtant pow'rs beneath the earth;
One from thoſe lords, thoſe hated lords that rule us,
Whoſe rude, unhallow'd hands are ſtain'd with blood:
This ſounds moſt dreadfull to this royal race.

ELECTRA.

This, like a piercing arrow, wounds my ſoul.

CHORUS.

Supreme of Gods, ſend from the realms of night
The ſlow-avenging Ate; bid her riſe
To blaſt the fraudfull and audacious hands
Of impious mortals: for a father's wrongs
She ſtamps her vengeance deep. When on this man
The vengefull ſword ſhall fall, and bleeding nigh
Lies this bad woman, be it mine to hear
Their ſhrieks of death, and anſwer to their cries
In notes as diſmal. Why ſhou'd I conceal
My honeſt hopes? Fate ſpreads her ſable wings,
And hovers o'er their heads; before their eyes
Stands indignation arm'd, and hate enrag'd,
Ready to rend their hearts, when Jove ſhall ſtretch
His puiſſant hands. O thou, whoſe pow'r ſubdues

The

The mighty, to this country ſeal thy faith,
And ratify their doom! On th' impious heads
I aſk for vengeance. You, whoſe dreaded pow'r
Th' infernal realms revere, ye Furies, hear me!
There is a law that, for each drop of blood
Shed on the earth, demands that blood be ſhed;
For from the ſlain Erinnys calls for ſlaughter,
On ruin heaping ruin. Ye dread pow'rs
Of Hell's dark realms, where are you now? Behold,
Ye potent curſes of the ſlain, behold
The poor remains of this imperial houſe
Sunk in diſtreſs, and all its glories vaniſh'd!
Where, King of Heav'n, may we ſeek for refuge?

ELECTRA.

Again my throbbing heart ſinks at the ſound
Of thy laments; and dark'ning o'er my ſoul
At thy ſad voice comes anguiſh and deſpair.
But when thy words breath courage, my ſick griefs
Are fled, and fairer fortune ſeems to ſmile.
But with what words to woo her? Speak aloud
The miſeries which we ſuffer from our parents?
Or ſmooth our tongues to glozing courteſy?

That

That ſoftens not our miſeries: and our ſpirits,
Rous'd by the wrongs of our ungentle mother,
Contract a wolfiſh fierceneſs. With bold hand
She ſtruck the ſtroke, bold as the Ciſſian dame
Train'd to the warrior's arms. She ſtruck him once;
Again ſhe ſtruck him; her uplifted hands
Redoubled blow on blow; ſwift on his head
The diſtant-ſounding ſtrokes with ſteep force fell.
Bold, unrelenting woman, that cou'd bear
Without one pitying ſigh t' entomb the king
Unhonour'd with his people's grief, the huſband
Without a tear to grace his obſequies.

ORESTES.

All thou haſt mentioned are indignities
That ſwell my grief to rage. But vengeance arms
This hand, aſſiſted by the Gods, to puniſh
The ignominious wrongs done to my father.
May this revenge be mine, then let me die!

ELECTRA.

When ſhe had kill'd, with barbarous hands ſhe mangled
His manly figure, and with this abuſe
Entomb'd him here, ſtudious to make his murder

A deed

A deed of horror, that thro' all thy life
Might ſhock thy ſoul. Such was thy father's death,
Such were thy father's ignominious wrongs.
But me, a poor, deſerted, worthleſs thing,
Spurn'd like a miſchievous cur from my apartments,
They bid be gone: there I could heave the ſigh
In ſecret, there indulge the mournfull pleaſure
To pour the tear unnotic'd, and uncheck'd,
Hear this, and on thy mind imprint it deep,
Engrave it on the tablet of thy heart;
Be reſolute, and calm. Theſe things are thus:
Know this, and let thine indignation riſe:
The time demands a firm, determin'd ſpirit.
And thou, my father, hear: on thee I call,
And with a friendly voice, tho' choak'd with tears,
Hear us, and aid!

CHORUS.

And with a friendly voice this ſocial train
To her ſad voice accords the ſtrain.
Hear, mighty ſhade, and from the realms of night
Reviſit this ætherial light;

Againſt

Againſt thy foes impart thy aid,
Be war with war, and blood with blood repaid!
Ye Gods, with juſtice ſtrike the blow!
I tremble, as the meaſures flow;
But Fate attends, and hears our call,
And, ſtern the bloody forfeit to demand,
With fury arms the kindred hand,
And bids the righteous Vengeance fall.
Here ſorrow holds her diſmal ſtate,
Unſated murder ſtains the ground,
Revenge behind and terror wait,
And deſolation ſtalks his round;
Not with a diſtant foe the war to wage,
But on this houſe to pour their rage.
Theſe are the ſtrains, that to the Gods below,
Th' avenging Gods, in rude notes flow:
Hear us, dread pow'rs; and this imperial race,
Victorious in your might, with glory grace!

ORESTES.

My royal father, who unroyally
Waſt murder'd, give me to command thy houſe!

ELECTRA.

Hear me, my father, for I want thy aid;
Grant me to ſhare his vengeance on Ægiſthus,
And then eſcape: ſo may the ſolemn feaſt
Be ſpread to thee; elſe when the grateſull odors
Are wafted from the feſtive board, to grace
The mighty dead, thy ſhade muſt want its honours.
To thee this hand ſhall bring the coſtlieſt off'rings
To thee ſhall conſecrate whate'er of wealth
Ought, from thy treaſures, to adorn my nuptials;
And with the holieſt reverence grace thy tomb.

ORESTES.

Earth, ſend my father to behold the combat!

ELECTRA.

Inſpire him, Proſerpine, with glorious force!

ORESTES.

Think on the bath where thou waſt murder'd, father!

ELECTRA.

Think on the net in which they murder'd thee!

ORESTES.

Toils, other than of braſs, entangled thee.

ELECTRA.

ELECTRA.

Th' inexplicable robe's accurs'd contrivance.

ORESTES.

My father, cannot theſe diſhonours raiſe thee?

ELECTRA.

Doſt thou not raiſe thy honour'd head? O ſend
Juſtice to aid thy friends: or if thy ſoul
Sinks with its wrongs, nor riſes to revenge them,
Be the like ſufferings ours! But, O my father,
Hear our laſt cries, and ſitting on thy tomb
Behold thy children: pity my weak ſex,
Pity his manly ſorrow, nor extinguiſh
Th' illuſtrious line of Pelops: ſo in death
Thou doſt not die; for children, when the tomb
Demands the parent, with ſurviving glory
Preſerve his fame; the corks that buoy the line,
And ſave the net from ſinking to the bottom.
O hear us; for thy ſake we pour theſe plaints.
Thou ſhalt preſerve thy glory, if with honour
Thou hear our words, our blameleſs words, that honour
The fortune of thy tomb, elſe unlamented!——
Now, brother, ſince thy ſoul is rous'd to dare

This deed, truſt on the God, and do it ſtraight.

ORESTES.

I ſhall: but let me pauſe awhile to aſk
Wherefore ſhe ſent theſe off'rings, on what motive
Thus late ſhe ſooths th' immedicable ill,
Paying this wretched honour to the dead
That cares not for it. What theſe preſents mean
Surpaſſes my conjecture, but her crime
Outweighs their worth; for all, that can be offer'd
T' atone for one man's blood, is ſpent in vain.
Yet, if you know, explain her motives to me.

CHORUS.

I know, for I was preſent: Dreams and viſions,
The terrors of the night, appall'd her ſoul;
Her guilty fears urg'd her to ſend theſe off'rings.

ORESTES.

Told ſhe the dreams, that ſo alarm'd her fears?

CHORUS.

She fanſied ſhe had giv'n a dragon birth.

ORESTES.

And what was the event? Tell me in brief.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

This new-born dragon, like an infant child,
Laid in the cradle ſeem'd in want of food;
And in her dream ſhe held it to her breaſt.

ORESTES.

Without a wound 'ſcaped ſhe the hideous monſter?

CHORUS.

The milk he drew was mix'd with clotted blood.

ORESTES.

'Tis not for nought this viſion from her huſband.

CHORUS.

She cry'd out in her ſleep with the affright;
And many lamps, dim-gleaming thro' the darkneſs,
To do her pleaſure enter'd the apartment.
Soon to the tomb ſhe ſends theſe funeral honours,
Medicinal, as ſhe hopes, to heal her ills.

ORESTES.

But to this earth, and to my father's tomb
I make my ſupplications, that in me
Her dream may be accompliſh'd; and I judge
It aptly correſponds: for as this ſerpent,
Leaving the place that once was mine, and laid

Swath'd

Swath'd like an infant, ſeiz'd that breaſt which nurs'd
My tender age, and mingled with the milk
Drew clotted blood; and as with the affright
She call'd out in her ſleep; it cannot be
But, as ſhe nurs'd this monſter, ſhe muſt die
A violent death: and with a dragon's rage
This hand ſhall kill her, as her dream declares.
Or how wilt thou expound theſe prodigies?

CHORUS.

Thus may it be. But now inſtruct thy friends
What each muſt ſingly do, and each not do.

ORESTES.

Few words ſuffice: then mark me: Let HER enter;
And keep, I charge thee, keep my purpoſe ſecret;
That they, who ſlew an honorable man
By curs'd deceit, may by deceit be caught
In the ſame ſnare, and periſh; ſo the God,
Pow'rfull Apollo, from whoſe ſacred voice
Nothing but truth can flow, admoniſh'd me.
I, like a ſtranger, harneſs'd in this coarſe
And way-worn garb, with Pylades my friend,
Will as a gueſt and friend knock at the gate:

Our

Our tongues ſhall imitate the ruſtic accent
Familiar to the mountain-race of Phocis.
Nor will the ſervants, 'tis a villainous houſe,
Receive us chearfully; but as we are,
There ſhall we ſtand; while each, that paſſes by,
With ſhrewd remarks ſhall ſhake his head, and ſay
Why are theſe ſtrangers thus inhoſpitably
Excluded from the gates, if their arrival
Ægiſthus knows 'midſt his domeſtic train?
But if I paſs the threſhold of the gates,
And find him ſeated on my father's throne,
Or ſhou'd he come t' accoſt me, be aſſur'd
Quick as the eye can glance, e'er he can ſay
Whence is this ſtranger? my impatient ſword
Shall ſtrike him dead. So ſhall the fell Erinnys,
That with an horrid joy riots in ſlaughter,
Quaff this third bowl of blood.—Go then, Electra,
Be watchfull; ſee that all things in the houſe
Be well diſpos'd. And you, I charge you guard
Your tongues; be ſilent where you ought, and where
Your voice can aid me, ſpeak. The reſt my friend,
That guides my ſword to vengeance, will o'erſee.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

Pregnant with ills the dreary air
Gives ſickneſs, pain, and terror birth:
The ſeas, that wind around the earth,
Fatal to man their hideous monſters bear:
Each foreſt in its ſhaggy ſides,
That darkens o'er the perilous ground,
The lurking, rav'nous ſavage hides,
Whilſt fierce birds wheel the ſummits round:
And mark with what tempeſtuous rage
Black from the ſkies the ruſhing winds engage.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

But who the dangerous thoughts can tell
That in man's daring boſom roll;
Or whirl the more tempeſtuous ſoul
Of woman, when the tyrant paſſions ſwell?
When love, to torment near allied,
Bids frenzy rule the troubled hour?
Love, that exerts with wanton pride
O'er female hearts deſpotic pow'r;

And

And binds in his ungentle chain
Each ſavage of the wood, each monſter of the main.

STROPHE 2.

Think with what ſullen frenzy fir'd
The Theſtian dame with ruthleſs hand
Caſt on the hearth the fatal brand;
The flames conſum'd it, and her ſon expir'd.
With horror think on Scylla's deed:
To win the favour of the foes,
The golden bracelets were the meed,
Againſt her father's life ſhe roſe,
Approach'd the ſleeping monarch's bed,
And reft the ſacred honours of his head.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

Amongſt theſe deeds of blood, that ſtain
The annals of the times of old,
Be that unhallow'd couch enroll'd,
Whoſe guilty loves this royal houſe profane.
Enroll'd be all that female hate
Form'd 'gainſt the chief in arms renown'd;
The chief, whoſe glorious, awefull ſtate
Foes 'midſt their rage with reverence own'd:

Thoſe glories, tho' they blaze no more,
Quench'd by a woman's hand, I ſtill adore.

## EPODE.

In the black annals of far diſtant time
The Leſbian dames recorded ſtand;
But the ſoul ſhudders at the crime,
And execrates the murders of their hand:
Baſely at once the huſbands bleed;
Th' indignant Gods abhor the deed.
And ſhall man dare with impious voice t' approve
Deeds, that offend the pow'rs above?
Thro' the gored breaſt
With rage impreſt
The ſword of juſtice hews the dreadfull wound;
And haughty might,
That mocks at right,
Like the vile duſt is trampled on the ground.
Righteous are thy decrees, eternal King,
And from the roots of juſtice ſpring:
Theſe ſhall ſtrike deep, and floriſh wide,
Whilſt all, that ſcorn them, periſh in their pride.

Fate

Fate the portentous ſword prepares,
And the rough labours of the anvil ſhares;
Wide thro' the houſe a tide of blood
Flows where a former tide had flow'd;
Erinnys marks the deſtin'd hour,
Vengefull her meditated rage to pour.

ORESTES.

What, does no ſervant hear me knock? Within
Who waits? Again I knock: Does no one hear?
A third time to the ſervants of this houſe
I call, if to the ſtranger at his gate
The great Ægiſthus bears a courteous ſoul.

SERVANT.

Forbear, I hear. Who art thou, and from whence?

ORESTES.

Go tell the lords of this fair houſe, to them
I come, charg'd with ſtrange tidings: haſte;
For now the ſable chariot of the night
Rolls on apace; and the dark hour exhorts
The way-ſpent traveller to repoſe beneath
The hoſpitable roof. Call forth the matron,
That has the charge of theſe domeſtic cares;

More decent, if a man; for modeſty
There checks the falt'ring tongue, but to a man
More confident a man ſpeaks free and open.

CLYTEMNESTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Speak, ſtrangers, what your wants: here ſhall you find
All that becomes an houſe like this; warm baths
Refreſhment of your toils, the well-ſpread couch
Inviting ſoft repoſe, and over all
An eye regarding juſtice. If your buſineſs
Be of more ſerious import, aſking counſil,
The province this of men; we will inform them.

ORESTES.

A Phocian am I, from the town of Daulis.
Occaſions of my own call'd me to Argos,
Nor aſk'd a better dreſs, than this coarſe garb
Familiar to me: onwards as I travel'd
I met a man unknown, myſelf to him
Unknown; he courteous queſtion'd me how far
I journey'd, and inform'd me of my way,

Strophius

Strophius of Phocis, ſo I chanc'd to learn;
Stranger, ſays he, ſince buſineſs of thy own
Leads thee to Argos, let me charge thy honour
To tell his parents that the young Oreſtes
Is dead. Forget it not. Whether his friends
With ſolemn obſequies will fetch him hence,
Or in eternal reſt our friendly earth
Shall lay him in her hoſpitable boſom,
Bring back their pleaſure; for the brazen urn
Now holds the aſhes of the honour'd youth,
Whom we lament. This, faithfull to my charge,
Have I deliver'd; if to kindred ears,
And thoſe, whoſe pow'r is ſovereign here, I know not.
But it is meet his parent knew the event.

ELECTRA.

Ah me! Thus deſolation on our head
Is fall'n. O thou relentleſs curſe, whoſe rage
Hung o'er this houſe, has thy unſparing eye
Mark'd what we lodg'd at diſtance, aiming there
Thy cruel ſhafts, to rob me of my friends?
E'en now Oreſtes, who with cautious tread
Had from this gulf of ruin freed his foot,

E'en

E'en he, the hope medicinal to the madneſs
Of this ill houſe, ſhows that our hope betrays us.

ORESTES.

It were my wiſh to have borne other tidings,
More welcome to the lords of this fair manſion,
And meriting their hoſpitable favours:
For what more ſtrongly to benevolence
Can bind the gratefull ſoul? Yet I ſhou'd deem it
An impious wrong not to diſcloſe e'en theſe,
Unwelcome, as they muſt be, to his friends,
So ſolemnly entruſted to my charge.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not leſs for this ſhalt thou receive ſuch uſage
As thy worth challenges; not leſs for this
Reſpected here: another wou'd have come
Charg'd with the ſame ſad meſſage. But the hour
Demands refreſhment for the ſtranger, ſpent
With the long travel of the weary day.
Lead him to thoſe apartments, where the men
Are well receiv'd; let his attendant follow,
His fellow traveller; let thy diligent care,
I charge thee, miniſter to all his wants.

We to the rulers of this houſe will bear
Theſe tidings, and amongſt our friends conſult
What meaſures in this ſad event to form.

CHORUS, alone.

Now, my dear partners, ſlaves to this proud houſe,
Now let us ſhow our fortitude, now teach
Our tongues a noble daring for Oreſtes.

Thou hallow'd earth, thou hallow'd mound,
Whoſe high ſepulchral round
Lies on the royal chief, that o'er the main
To glory led his martial train,
Now hear us, now impart your aid:
On this important hour,
Perſuaſion, try thy fraudfull pow'r:
And thou, thro' night's ſurrounding ſhade,
Come, Mercury, from the ſhades below,
And when the falchion flames, direct th' avenging blow!

SERVANT.

SERVANT, GILISSA, CHORUS.

SERVANT.

This ſtranger, it ſhou'd ſeem, brings mournfull tidings;
I ſee the tear ſteal from Giliſſa's eye,
Nurſe of Oreſtes. Wherefore doſt thou paſs
Theſe doors? The ſorrows, that attend thy ſteps,
Shall here find no reward: expect it not.

GILISSA.

My royal miſtreſs order'd me with ſpeed
To call Ægiſthus to theſe ſtranger gueſts;
That man from man he with more certainty
Might learn this freſh report. Before the ſervants
She kept her ſmile beneath a mournfull eye,
To hide her joy at this event; to her
A joy indeed, but to this houſe a tale
Of deep affliction. He too, when he hears
The narrative, will from his ſoul rejoice.
Ah me! what ſorrows in ſucceſſive train
Have in this houſe of Atreus pierc'd my ſoul
From antient times: but never have I ſuffer'd
A loſs like this: with patience other ills,

Well

Well as I might, I bore. But my Oreſtes
Was the dear object of my anxious thoughts;
An infant I receiv'd him from his mother;
I nurs'd him, many' a night to all his wants,
To all his cries attentive, with a care
That now avails me not: E'er reaſon dawns,
The nurſe's care is needfull; in his cradle
The infant knows not to expreſs his wants,
Riſe they from thirſt, or hunger, or the calls
Of nature: with fond diligence I mark'd
Th' inſtinctive cry, nor with a ſqueamiſh niceneſs
Thought ſcorn of any office; for my love
Made all delightfull. Now, unhappy me!
My dear Oreſtes is, I hear, no more.
But I am ſent in haſte to that vile man,
Whoſe rank pollution ſtains this noble houſe:
With pleaſure this report will he receive.

CHORUS.

With what appointment does ſhe bid him come?

GILISSA.

Appointment! Let me comprehend thy meaning.

CHORUS.

If with his train of guards, or unattended.

GILISSA.

She bids him come attended with his guards.

CHORUS.

No, tell him not, this hated lord; but wear
A face of chearfullneſs; and urge him hither
Alone, devoid of fear, to be inform'd.
For the mind catches from the meſſenger
A ſecret elevation, and bold ſwell.

GILISSA.

This news, it ſeems, is welcome to thy ſoul.

CHORUS.

But what if Heav'n's high King redreſs theſe ills?

GILISSA.

How? With Oreſtes all our hopes are dead.

CHORUS.

Not all. This needs no prophet to unfold it.

GILISSA.

Haſt thou heard ought diſproving this report?

CHORUS.

Go, bear thy meſſage; do as thou art order'd:

The Gods, whoſe care this is, will guide th' event.

GILISSA.

I go, in all obſervant of thy precepts.
May what is beſt come from the fav'ring Gods!

CHORUS.

STROPHE.

Now my righteous pray'r approve,
Father and King of Gods, Olympian Jove!
To thee may I unfold
Such vows, as from the modeſt and the wiſe
In the cauſe of juſtice riſe.
O, may theſe eyes behold
Her pow'r, ador'd by all, maintain
The glories of her awefull reign!
Hear me, monarch of the ſky,
Protect him with thy guardian care;
O'er his foes exalt him high,
That lord it in the regal chair!
His ruin'd honours thus reſtor'd,
With fiercer rage thy vengeance ſhall be pour'd.

ANTISTROPHE.

Yok'd to affliction's iron car
This orphan ſon of a lov'd father ſpare:
Reſtrain its headlong force;
And let the rapid wheels, with many' a bound
Rolling o'er the rugged ground,
Here ſtop their painfull courſe.
And you, that guard this royal ſeat,
Its blazing wealth, its gorgeous ſtate,
Hear, propitious Gods, and ſave!
Let not the blood of former ſlain
Freſh returns of vengeance crave;
No more theſe crimſon'd manſions ſtain;
Slaughter no more from ſlaughter riſe,
If low beneath the righteous ſword he lies!

MONOSTROPHE.

Thou, that haſt fix'd thy dreary reign
Deep in the yawning gulf below,
Yet let him riſe, yet view this ſcene,
Around his gloomy eyeballs throw,
Diſtinct and clear the vengeance mark,
That threatens from her covert dark!

Thou,

Thou, ſon of Maia, come, and with thee lead
Succeſs, that crowns the daring deed:
To form the cloſe and dark deſign,
Whether th' ambiguous tale thou lov'ſt to weave,
And throw around the veil of night;
Or bid'ſt e'en truth itſelf deceive,
Diſplay'd in all the dazzling blaze of light;
The pow'rs of ſecreſy are thine.
Then ſhall this penſive female train
Theſe rich oblations pay no more;
No more the melancholy ſtrain,
Tuned to the voice of anguiſh, pour.
Raptur'd their triumph ſhall I ſee,
My friends from ruffian danger free.
And thou, when thy ſtern part is come, be bold:
Think how in blood thy father roll'd:
And when, "my ſon, my ſon," ſhe cries,
To melt thy manly mind with plaintive moan,
Then to her guilty ſoul recall
Thy murder'd father's dying groan;
And to his angry vengeance let her fall:
Like Perſeus turn thy ruthleſs eyes;

Juſt to thy friends above, thy friends below,
Aim with applauded rage the deſtin'd wound;
Great in thy vengeance ruſh upon the foe,
And ſtrike the murd'rer bleeding to the ground.

ÆGISTHUS, GILISSA, CHORUS.

ÆGISTHUS.

This meſſage has a voice, that calls me forth
To learn with more aſſurance this report,
By certain ſtrangers brought, touching the death
Of young Oreſtes; moſt unwelcome this;
And the relation to this houſe will add
Freſh terror to the fear, whoſe unheal'd wound
Smarts inwardly, and rankles. Shou'd I give
Full credit to this tale, or rather deem it
The idle offspring of theſe womens' fears,
That lightly roſe, and will as lightly die?
Tell me, what proof gives credit to this rumour?

GILISSA.

Indeed we heard it: but go in, examine
Theſe ſtrangers; leſs regard is due to rumour,
Than to clear information learnt from them.

ÆGISTHUS.

ÆGISTHUS.

I wiſh to ſee this ſtranger, and to aſk him
If he himſelf was preſent at his death,
Or only ſpeaks from an obſcure report.
Deception finds no eaſy entrance here.

CHORUS.

What ſhou'd I ſay, eternal King,
Or how begin the ſtrain?
Theſe paſſions how contain,
That in my throbbing breaſt tumultuous ſpring?
O that, in aid, my daring deed
Might all the force of words exceed!
For now diſtain'd with blood the bick'ring ſword
The conteſt ends; if all
This royal race ſhall fall;
Or the juſt laws their antient ſtate reſuming,
And liberty her light reluming,
Hail to his father's rights the ſon reſtor'd.
'Gainſt two the godlike youth conteſting ſtands
Alone: May heav'n-ſent conqueſt grace his hands!

ÆGISTHUS, within.

Oh! I am ſlain.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

That groan! Again that groan!
Whence? What is done? Who rules the ſtorm within!
The deed is finiſh'd: let us keep aloof,
And ſeem unconſcious of theſe ills: beſt ſtand
At diſtance, whilſt deſtruction ends her work.

SERVANT.

Woe, woe to me! Woe to my ſlaughter'd lord!
Woe on my wretched head, and woe again!
Ægiſthus is no more. But open here,
Ye females, inſtantly unbar theſe doors;
Th' occaſion calls for vigor, not t' aſſiſt
The ſlain. Ho, here! What, call I to the deaf?
Or ſleep you? Where is Clytemneſtra? How
Employ'd? Her life ſtands at the ſword's bare point,
And ready vengeance ſeems to prompt the blow.

CLYTEMNESTRA, SERVANT, CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What means thy clamour? Whence theſe ſhrieks of woe?

SERVANT.

They, that were rumour'd dead, have ſlain the living.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah me! I underſtand thee, tho' thy words
Are dark; and we ſhall periſh in the toils,
E'en as we ſpread them. Give me inſtantly
The ſlaught'ring axe; it ſhall be ſeen if yet
We know the way to conquer, or are conquer'd:
Theſe daring meaſures have my wrongs enforc'd.

ORESTES, PYLADES, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

ORESTES.

Thee too I ſeek. He has his righteous meed.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah me! my dear Ægiſthus, thou art dead.

ORESTES.

And doſt thou love the man? In the ſame tomb
Shalt thou be laid, nor e'en in death forſake him.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah, ſtay thy hand, my ſon: my child, my child,
Revere this breaſt, on which thou oft' has ſlept,
And oft thy infant lips have preſs'd its milk.

ORESTES.

What ſhall I do, my Pylades? Reſtrain'd

By filial reverence, dread to kill my mother?

PYLADES.

Where then the other oracles of Phœbus,
Giv'n from the Pythian ſhrine? The faithfull vows,
The ſolemn adjurations, whither vaniſh'd?
Deem all the world thy foes, ſave the juſt Gods.

ORESTES.

Thou haſt convinc'd me; thy reproofs are juſt.—
Follow him: on his body will I ſlay thee.
Alive thou held'ſt him dearer than my father;
Then ſleep with him in death, ſince thou cou'dſt love him,
And hate the man who moſt deſerv'd thy love.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I nurs'd thy youth, and wiſh to tend thy age.

ORESTES.

What, ſhall my father's murd'rer dwell with me?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The Fates, my ſon, the Fates decreed his death.

ORESTES.

And the ſame Fates decree that thou ſhalt die.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Doſt thou not dread a mother's curſe, my ſon?

ORESTES.

ORESTES.

That mother caſt me out to want and miſery.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not ſo; I ſent thee to a friendly houſe.

ORESTES.

Tho' nobly born, a ſlave, and doubly ſold.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What in exchange, what price did I receive?

ORESTES.

I bluſh to charge thee with the guilty price.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Bluſh not; but with it name thy father's lightneſs.

ORESTES.

Sitting in wanton eaſe, blame not his toils.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Bar'd from our huſbands, irkſome are our hours.

ORESTES.

Yet in your eaſe your huſbands' toils ſupport you.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My ſon, my ſon, thou wilt not kill thy mother!

ORESTES.

Thy hand, not mine, is guilty of thy death.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Take heed; avoid a mother's angry Furies.

ORESTES.

Relaxing here, how ſhall I 'ſcape my father's?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Methinks while yet alive before my tomb
I pour the funeral ſtrain, that nought avails me.

ORESTES.

Nought: for my father's fate ordains thy death.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah me! I gave this dragon birth, I nurs'd him:
Theſe terrors of the night were more than phantoms.

ORESTES.

Foul and unnatural was thy murd'rous deed:
Foul and unnatural be thy puniſhment.

CHORUS, alone.

The double ruin e'en of theſe awakes
Our grief. But ſince his cruel fate has plung'd
Oreſtes deep in blood, pour we the pray'r
That his fair day ſet not in endleſs night.

STROPHE.

STROPHE.

Revenge at length is come, tho' ſlow her pace,
For Priam's ruin'd race.
In Agamemnon's royal hall,
Rous'd by the Pythian God's inſpiring call,
The glorious exile ſtands;
With lion port, with martial mein,
Such as the God of war is ſeen,
The ſword of juſtice light'ning in his hands,
Fir'd by the prompting voice divine,
That thunder'd from the ſhrine,
Dauntleſs he dared theſe dang'rous courts to tread.
Hark! 'tis his voice: the walls around
His cheerfull ſhouts reſound:
No more the tyrant's malice ſhall he dread;
The tyrants' laviſh hands no more
Shall waſte his treaſur'd ſtore;
No more their pride uſurp his throne,
Low in the duſt their hoſtile pride o'erthrown.

ANTISTROPHE.

With dark and ſecret fraud HIS coward mind
The bloody deed deſign'd.

Revenge,

Revenge, with ſolemn ſteps and ſlow
Advancing, meditates the ſecret blow;
Daughter of Heav'n's high Lord,
Tho' by the name of Juſtice known
Her ſovereign pow'r weak mortals own,
She guides his hand, ſhe points his thund'ring ſword;
And ruſhing with impetuous might
Aſſiſts him in the fight,
Breathing deſtructive fury on his foes.
Nor leſs 'gainſt HER whoſe treach'rous hand
This injur'd houſe profan'd,
From his deep ſhrine with fury Phœbus glows.
For e'en the Gods with ſacred awe
Revere this righteous law,
To ſpurn the guilt that aſks their aid:
And be this heav'n-commanding law obey'd.

EPODE.

Chearfull the light begins to riſe.
Sunk was our ſun, and long in darkneſs lay,
Nor promis'd the return of day:
Soon may his beams reviſit our ſad eyes!

When

When theſe cleans'd floors no more retain
Polluting murder's ſanguine ſtain,
Time haply may behold his orient rays
O'er theſe illumin'd turrets blaze;
And fortune, mounted on her golden ſeat,
Rejoice in our triumphant ſtate,
Rejoice to ſee our glories riſe,
And our unclouded ſun flame o'er the ſaphire ſkies.

ORESTES, CHORUS.

ORESTES.

Behold the proud oppreſſors of my country,
The murderers of my father, the deſtroyers
Of his imperial houſe: commanding awe
When ſeated on their thrones, retaining yet
Their loves, of their affection if with truth
Hence we conjecture ought, and their oath ſtands
Inviolate; for to my father's death
They form'd th' unhallow'd compact, and to die
Together: theſe events confirm their oath.
Behold again, you that attentive mark
Theſe ills, behold this artifice, the toils

That

That tangled hand and foot my ſuff'ring father.
This was his veſtment; form a ring around it,
Spread it, diſplay it to th' all-ſeeing ſun,
That with his awefull eye he may behold
My mother's impious deeds, and in the hour
Of judgement be my witneſs that with juſtice
My vengeance fell on her. As for Ægiſthus,
I reck not of his death; a ſacred law
He dared pollute; and juſtly has he paid
The dreadfull penalty. She 'gainſt her huſband,
Once the dear object of her love, to which
Her ſwelling zone bore many' a precious pledge,
Now flam'd with ranc'rous hate, and murd'rous malice.
What noxious monſter, what envenom'd viper,
That poiſons with a touch th' unwounded body,
E'er breath'd ſuch peſtilent and balefull rage?
You view that veſtment: tell me now, were all
The pow'rs of language mine, what ſhou'd I call it?
Toils planted for a ſavage? Or the bands
That for the tomb enwrap the dead? A curſe
Well may you call it, and the gives of Hell.
Such may the pilferer wear, the thieviſh ſlave

That pillages his gueſts, and trains his life
To plunder; ſuch the ruffian, whoſe rude hand
Prompted to murd'rous deeds is ſtain'd with blood.
Never, ye Gods, may ſuch a woman ſhare
My bed: No, rather childleſs let me periſh!

CHORUS.

O horror, horror! Dreadfull were your deeds,
And dreadfull is your death; the ling'ring vengeance
Burſt with redoubled force. This was her deed,
Her curſed deed: this veſtment is my witneſs,
Ting'd by Ægiſthus' ſword; the guſhing blood,
Now ſtiffen'd, ſtains its tyrian-tinctur'd radiance.
Now I applaud his juſt revenge; now weep,
Viewing this bloody robe, and mourn theſe deeds,
The ſuff'rings of this houſe, and e'en this conqueſt,
Dreadfull atonement! Never ſhall the life
Of mortal man be paſs'd uncharg'd with ills:
On ſome with rapid rage the tempeſt rolls;
Slowly on ſome the gath'ring clouds advance.

ORESTES.

Be that another's care: I ſee the doom
Aſſign'd to me. For as the rapid car

Whirl'd from the courſe by the impetuous ſteeds
That ſcorn the reins, ſo my exulting heart
Bounds with tumultuous and ungovern'd paſſions.
Yet let me plead, whilſt reaſon holds its ſeat,
Plead to my friends that in the cauſe of juſtice
I ſlew my mother; for her impious hands,
Stain'd with my father's blood, call'd down revenge
From the offended Gods. And here I plead,
To mitigate the deed, the Pythian prophet,
Phœbus, whoſe voice pronounc'd me from the ſhrine,
If I atchiev'd the vengeance, free from guilt:
To my refuſal dreadfull was his threat
Of puniſhments, beyond the reach of thought.
Graced with this branch of olive, and this wreath,
I will approach his ſhrine, his central throne,
And his eternal fires, there to be cleans'd
From the pollution of this kindred blood:
No other roof receives me; ſo the God
Injoin'd. Meanwhile let Argos be inform'd,
And all this people witneſs what a weight
Of miſeries oppreſs'd me: dead or living,
A vagrant, and an exile from my country,

I leave

I leave theſe words behind me; having done
What honour gave in charge, I ſhall not bluſh
Hearing my fame reviled, nor bear in abſence
The tongue of obloquy, the ſtate of Argos
Freed by this hand, that boldly cruſh'd theſe dragons.——
Ha! look, ye female captives, what are theſe
Veſted in ſable ſtoles, of Gorgon aſpect,
Their ſtarting locks tangled with knots of vipers!
I fly, I fly; I cannot bear the ſight.

CHORUS.

What phantoms, what unreal ſhadows thus
Diſtract thee? Victor in thy father's cauſe,
To him moſt dear, ſtart not at fancied terrors.

ORESTES.

Theſe are no phantoms, no unreal ſhadows;
I know them now; my mother's angry Furies.

CHORUS.

The blood as yet is freſh upon thy hands,
And thence theſe terrors ſink into thy ſoul.

ORESTES.

Royal Apollo, how their numbers ſwell!
And the foul gore drops from their hideous eyes.

CHORUS.

Within are lavers. Soon as thou ſhalt reach
His ſhrine, Phœbus will free thee from theſe ills.

ORESTES.

And ſee you nothing there? Look, look! I ſee them.
Diſtraction's in the ſight: I fly, I fly.

CHORUS.

Bleſt may'ſt thou be: and may the God, whoſe eye
Looks on thee, guard thee in theſe dreadfull dangers!
Thrice on this royal houſe the burſting ſtorm
Hath pour'd its rage in blood. Thyeſtes firſt
Mourn'd for his ſlaughter'd ſons. Th' imperial lord,
The leader of the martial hoſts of Greece,
Next fell beneath the murd'ring ſword, and ſtain'd
Th' enſanguin'd bath. Then came th' intrepid youth
Arm'd with the ſword—of Freedom ſhou'd I ſay,
Or Fate?—How long ſhall vengeance pour her terrors?
When curb her firey rage, and ſleep in peace?

# THE

# FURIES.

THE

FURIES.

# The FURIES.

IT is pleaſant enough to obſerve with what heat the critics riſe againſt this tragedy. C'eſt ſi bizarre.—L'unité de lieu n'eſt pas gardée dans cette piéce: mais ce n'eſt pas-la qui choque le plus.—Tota œconomia dramatis impia eſt et inepta.—Hic uno momento tota ſcenæ facies mutatur, et pro Delphis ac templo Apollinis Delphici habemus Athenas et templum Minervæ Athenis. Nihil ineptius aut inconcinnius excogitari poſſet.——The poet, it ſeems, had dared to violate the unities; and further has introduced perſonages of ſo extravagant a character as to baffle the ſkill of theſe literary martinets, and to whip them from their foining fence; hinc illæ lachrymæ. Æſchylus in all his other pieces that remain to us, has paid the ſtricteſt attention to theſe favorite unities; and with reaſon; he was their father, and knew their merit as well as any man: Even here, where his management of the ſubject led him to treat them with leſs reſpect, he has ſoftened the violation by a kind of magic power: Apollo and the Furies muſt be allowed the liberty to tranſport themſelves whither and when they pleaſe; and Mercury has the charge of conducting Oreſtes; ſo that had Horace wrote,

Ille per extentum Funem mihi poſſe videtur
Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Inritat, mulcet, falſis terroribus implet
Ut magus, et modo me DELPHIS, modo ponit Athenis,

the alluſion would have added a wonderful propriety to the expreſſion, and the lines have conveyed a juſt character of this tragedy. However a French or a Dutch critic may be ſhocked at this change of ſcene, to an Athenian nothing could be more agreeable than to ſee a conteſt, which Apollo could not compoſe at Delphos, brought before the great counſil of his own city, the God in perſon attending and pleading in the cauſe. That reſpect to his country, which diſtinguiſhes our noble poet above all the writers of antiquity, has an irreſiſtable charm. " Rules, art, de-
" corum, all fall before it. It goes directly to the heart, and gains
" all purpoſes at once." The Engliſh reader feels this in its full force, and Æſchylus is acquitted of the charge of having violated an unity.—As theſe dreadfull ſiſters were the miniſters of the offended Gods, to execute their vengeance on impious mortals ſtained with blood, juſt, impartial, and of reſiſtleſs power, they were held in the higheſt reverence: as they were cruel, implacable, and delighted with their terrible office, they were deteſted, and abhorred by Gods and men: this accounts for the very different treatment they here meet with. For the reſt, let P. Brumoy be the poet's advocate. " On ſent aſſez que les traits rude et un peu
" groſſiers de cette piéce ſont fort oppoſés à notre goût, et au vray
" goût du théâtre. Mais il ne faut pas confondre parmi ces traits,
" ce qui regarde uniquement les mœurs et les idées des Grecs.
" Le ronflement des Furies, et ce ſpectacle des monſtres difformes,
" ne vaut du tout rien. Cependant, comme c'etoient des Divini-

" tés

" tès reſpectable pour les Grecs, ils les voyoient avec d'autre
" yeux que nous. A plus forte raiſon devoient-ils être moins
" choqués de voir Apollon plaider pour Oreſte, et Minerve jouer
" le rôle qu'elle joue. Tout cela étoit dans leur genie; et il eſt
" néceſſaire qu'on s'en rapproche autant qu'il eſt poſſible, pour ne
" pas trouver ridicule une tragédie qui ne l'etoit certainement pas
" au goût du peuple LE PLUS POLI DE L' UNIVERS."

Had theſe critics explained the motives, which induced this venerable court to acquit Oreſtes, from the laws and uſages of antient times, they would have been better employed: but not a word of this. This curious enquiry was reſerved for a writer of a very different genius; and the reader will thank me for referring him to the notes on the Epiſtle to the Piſos, v. 127.

This foul ſiſterhood on the Athenian ſtage amounted to fifty: the conſternation ariſing from their hideous figures, and geſtures, and yellings, had ſuch fatal effects upon the children et les femmes enceintes, that the ſtate by an expreſs law reduced the number of the Chorus to fifteen, and afterwards to twelve. But the tranſlator dares aſſure the Engliſh ladies, for whom he has too great a reſpect to offer them any thing that can have the leaſt tendency to hurt them, that they may read this play with the utmoſt ſafety. Theſe antient virgins are, to be ſure, at firſt a little wayward, and rather outrageous; but they ſoften by degrees, till they become perfectly good-humoured, and the beſt company in the world.

He flatters himſelf that he needs not make any apology for paſſing ſo ſlightly over ces ronflements redoubles des Furies, which are marked with great exactneſs in the original; nor for an omiſſion of ſomewhat a ſimilar nature in the laſt ſcene of the PERSIANS. He has taken the liberty to change the poſition of a few lines, where the Furies quit the temple of Apollo: which to him appeared neceſſary.

# Perſons of the Drama.

The PYTHIAN PRIESTESS.

APOLLO.

MINERVA.

The GHOST of CLYTEMNESTRA.

ORESTES.

CHORUS, the FURIES.

# THE FURIES.

Scene, the Veſtibule of the Temple of the Pythian Apollo.

The PRIESTESS.

WITH reverence firſt to th' Earth I pay theſe vows,
The firſt prophetic pow'r: to Themis next,
Who next her mother held, they ſay, this ſeat
Oracular: Titanian Phœbe then,
She too the daughter of the Earth, unforc'd
Aſſum'd this ſeat; to Phœbus at his birth
Rich gifts, in honour of the day, ſhe brought,
And grac'd him with her name; the Delian rock,

The

The lake he left, and anchor'd in the port
Sacred to Pallas: thence to this fair region,
And high Parnaſſus, held his ſolemn march:
Attendant on his ſtate the ſons of Vulcan
With reverend awe prepare his way, and tame
The rude and ſavage earth; the joyfull people
Hail his arrival, and the ſceptred Delphus,
Lord of this realm, ador'd the paſſing God:
With his own ſacred ſkill high Jove inſpir'd
His raptur'd ſoul, and placed him on this throne,
The fourth prophetic God, whence now he gives
His father's oracles: To theſe I raiſe
My firſt-breath'd vows. Nor leſs Pronæan Pallas
Demands her meed of praiſe. Next I adore
The nymphs, that in Corycia's cavern'd rocks,
Lov'd haunt of ſoaring birds, in ruſtic ſtate
Have fix'd their reſidence; tho' Bacchus claims
The rude domain: my memory now recalls
With what a port he led his raging nymphs
To havoc, when devoted Pentheus fled
Affrighted, as an hare, before his hunters.
The fountains next of Pliſtus, and the pow'r

Of

Of Neptune I invoke: and laſtly thee,
Supreme, all-perfect Jove! Theſe rites perform'd,
As Prieſteſs of the Shrine I reaſſume
My ſacred ſeat. Frequented as of old
Be this oracular fane; and may the Gods
Grant me auſpicious anſwers: if from Greece
Th' inquirers, pleas'd return they with the Fates!
But my voice utters, what the God inſpires.

[She enters the temple, and returns affrighted.]

Things horrible to tell, and horrible
To ſight, have forc'd me from the ſane again:
Trembling with fear my lax limbs ill ſupport
My frame, ſave that my hands with eager graſp
Uphold my ſinking weakneſs as I paſs.
As to the ſhrine with many' a garland crown'd
I bend my age-enfeebled ſteps, beneath
The central dome I ſee a man abhorr'd
By the juſt Gods, a ſuppliant it ſhou'd ſeem,
For ſuch his poſture; but his hands are ſtain'd
With blood; in one he holds a new-drawn ſword,
High in the other, crown'd with ample wreaths
An olive branch, with wreaths of ſnowy wool

Handſomely wrought: thus far I ſpeak aſſur'd.
Before him lies a troop of hideous women
Stretch'd on the ſeats, and ſleeping; yet not women,
But Gorgons rather, nor the Gorgon form
Exactly repreſenting, as I have ſeen them
Drawn by the painter's imitative pencil,
Snatching the viands from the board of Phineus.
Theſe have not wings; but cloath'd in ſable ſtoles,
Abhorr'd and execrable; as they ſleep
Hoarſe in their hollow throats their harſh breath rattles,
And their gall'd eyes a rheumy gore diſtill.
Ill ſuit ſuch loathſome weeds the hallow'd fane
Graced with the forms of ſculptur'd Gods, ill ſuit
The roofs of men: ſo foul a ſiſterhood
Till now I never ſaw; no land can boaſt
To have produc'd a breed ſo horrible,
But toils, and groans, and miſchiefs muſt enſue.
But here Apollo reigns; his awefull pow'r
Guards his own fane, auſpicious to diſcloſe
The dark decrees of Fate, to ſpread the glow
Of vig'rous health, to breath th' ambroſial gales,
And chaſe from other manſions all that hurts.

The

The temple opens. Apollo is ſeen. Oreſtes as a ſuppliant. The Furies in a deep ſleep.

APOLLO.

No: I will not forſake thee: to the end
My guardian care ſhall favour and aſſiſt thee
Preſent, or diſtant far: but to thy foes
I know not mercy. See this grieſly troop,
Sleep has oppreſs'd them, and their baffled rage
Shall fail, grim-viſag'd hags, grown old
In loath'd virginity: nor God, nor man
Approach'd their bed, nor ſavage of the wilds;
For they were born for miſchiefs, and their haunts
In dreary darkneſs 'midſt the yawning gulfs
Of Tartarus beneath, by men abhorr'd,
And by th' Olympian Gods. Fly then, nor yield
To weak diſtruſt: they, be thou ſure, will follow
With unremitting chace thy flying ſteps
Wide wand'ring o'er the firm terrene, and o'er
The humid ſea, and wave-ſurrounded towns.
But faint thou not, ſink not beneath thy toils;
Fly to the city of Minerva, take

Thy ſuppliant ſeat, with reverence in thy arms
Graſp her time-honour'd image. Holding there
Concordant counſils, lenient of theſe ills,
We ſhall not want the means to heal thy pains,
And ratify thy peace: for at my bidding
Thy ſword is purple with thy mother's blood.

ORESTES.

'Tis not unknown to thee, royal Apollo,
That I have done no deed of baſe injuſtice:
This known, forſake not, ſlight not my juſt cauſe:
Strong is thy pow'r, and faithfull to defend.

APOLLO.

Remember: let not fear unman thy mind.
And thou, my brother, by our ties of blood,
Our common parent, I adjure thee, Mercury,
Protect him: rightly if the name of guide
Be thine, be thou his guide; defend my ſuppliant;
For Jove with reverence looks on mortal man,
That awefully reveres our guiding pow'r.

To

To the FURIES ſleeping

The GHOST of CLYTEMNESTRA.

What, can you ſleep? Is this a time t' indulge
Your indolent repoſe? Thro' your neglect
I am diſhonour'd 'mongſt the dead, revil'd,
For that I ſlew him, with inceſſant taunts,
And wander with diſgrace: this infamy,
I tell you, is thro' you: my horrid ſuff'rings,
From thoſe moſt dear to me, excite no anger
Of one offended God; yet I was ſlain
By my ſon's hand. With thy mind's eye behold
Theſe wounds: in ſleep the vig'rous ſoul, ſet free
From groſs corporeal ſenſe, with keener view
Looks thro' the fate of mortals, dimly ſeen
Thro' the day's troubled beam. Oft' have ye taſted
My temp'rate off'rings mix'd with fragrant honey,
Gratefull libations; oft' the hallow'd feaſt
Around my hearth, at midnight's ſolemn hour,
When not a God ſhar'd in your rites: but this,
All this I ſee diſparag'd now, and ſcorn'd;
And he is fled, light as the bounding roe,
Burſt from your nets, with many' a bitter ſcoff.

Hear

Hear me, O hear! 'tis for my ſoul's repoſe
I plead: rouſe your keen ſenſe, infernal pow'rs,
'Tis Clytemneſtra calls you in your dreams.
Deep is your ſleep; mean while he diſtant flies:
I aſk your aid; elſe not a ſuppliant comes
To interrupt your reſt: ſupine you lie
In dead repoſe, nor pity my afflictions;
Meanwhile Oreſtes flies: ſhall he eſcape,
The murd'rer of his mother? Sound thy ſleep,
And loud thy deep-drawn breath. Haſt thou e'er done
Ought, but fell deeds of miſchief? Rouſe, awake:
The terrors of the dragon loſe their force,
Quench'd in the dark profound of toil and ſleep.

CHORUS, aſleep.

Seize him there, ſeize him, ſeize him: take good heed.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

In dreams doſt thou purſue him, like the hound
That opens in his ſleep, on th' eager chace
E'en then intent. And is this all? Awake,
Ariſe: let not thy toil ſubdue thee; know
What loſs enſues if ſleep enfeebles thee;
And let theſe juſt reproaches ſting thy mind,

Incentives

Incentives to the wiſe: with firey breath,
That ſnuffs the ſcent of blood, purſue this ſon,
Follow him, blaſt him in the proſp'rous chace.

CHORUS, awaking.

Awake, ariſe: rouſe her as I rouſe thee.
Yet doſt thou ſleep? Leave thy repoſe; ariſe:
Look we if this firm guard hath been in vain.

Ha, ſiſters, ha! 'tis baſe, 'tis foul;
Vain is our labour, vain our care:
This inſult ſtings my tortur'd ſoul,
Untaught contempt and wrong to bear.
Whilſt overpow'r'd with ſleep I lay,
Burſt from the net eſcapes the prey.

Great triumph, treach'rous ſon of Jove,
In youth's freſh prime to mock my age!
Thee cou'd this impious ſuppliant move
(And thou a God) whoſe cruel rage
Plung'd in his mother's breaſt his ſword?
Yet thou haſt ſcreen'd the wretch abhorr'd.

Claſhing

Claſhing her ſcourge with hideous ſound
Reproach upon my ſlumbers ſtole;
Deep in my heart impreſs'd the wound,
E'en yet chill horror ſhakes my ſoul.
Theſe are the deeds in miſrule's hour
When youthfull Gods uſurp the pow'r.

See all defil'd with gore thy throne,
There ſate the murd'rer dropping blood.
Yet theſe pollutions are thy own;
From thee the call, the impulſe flow'd:
Such grace, deſpis'd th' age-honour'd Fates,
Your new, unhallow'd ſhrines awaits.

And ſhall this wretch in ſafety breath,
Screen'd by thy pow'r ſevere to me?
No: let him fly the earth beneath,
Never, he never ſhall be free:
No: as he dared this murd'rous deed,
Murder ſhall fall upon his head.

APOLLO.

APOLLO.

Hence, I command you, from my hallow'd ſeat
Begone with ſpeed; quit this oracular ſhrine:
This is no place to ſnatch your winged ſerpents,
And hurl them from your golden-twiſted ſtring,
To wring the black blood from the human heart
With torture, then diſgorge your horrid feaſt
Of clotted gore: Such gueſts my houſe abhors.
Begone where vengeance with terrific rage
Digs out the eyes, or from the mangled trunk
Remorſeleſs rends the head; to ſlaughters go,
Abortions, lurking ambuſh, rampir'd force,
To ſuff'rings, to impalements, where the wretch
Writhes on the ſtake in tortures, yelling loud
With many' a ſhriek: In feaſts like theſe, ye hags
Abhorr'd, is your delight; ſufficient proof
That execrable form: the deſert wild,
Where the blood-rav'ning lion makes his den,
Such ſhou'd inhabit; nor with impure tread
Pollute theſe golden ſhrines: begone, and graze
Without a keeper; for of ſuch an herd
Th' indignant Gods diſdain to take the charge.

CHORUS.

Now, royal Phœbus, hear me ſpeak: in this
Not an aſſociate art thou, but alone
Thou didſt this deed, and thine alone the blame.

APOLLO.

Why this to me? Inform me; but be brief.

CHORUS.

Thy voice, pronounc'd from this oracular ſhrine,
Injoin'd this wretch to ſhed his mother's blood.

APOLLO.

Injoin'd him to avenge his father's death.

CHORUS.

To this ſtrange murder promis'd thy protection.

APOLLO.

I charg'd him to ſeek refuge in this ſhrine.

CHORUS.

But theſe attendants thou with taunts inſulteſt.

APOLLO.

Unworthy they t' approach this ſacred ſeat.

CHORUS.

Such was our charge: we come not uncommanded.

APOLLO.

What is that honour? Make the glorious boaſt.

CHORUS.

To drive the murd'rers of their mothers hence.

APOLLO.

What, fav'ring her, whoſe bold hand ſlew her huſband?

CHORUS.

Nor ſhou'd his hands be ſtain'd with kindred blood.

APOLLO.

The ſacred pledges of connubial Juno
And Jove haſt thou diſparag'd, ſet at nought;
And Venus is diſparag'd by thy words,
From whom the deareſt joys, that ſweeten life,
Ariſe; for hallow'd is the nuptial bed,
Of deeper ſanctity than oaths, and guarded
By juſtice. If to thoſe, whoſe mutual rage
Bathes in each others' blood, thy chaſt'ning hand
Is gentle; if thine eye looks milder on them,
Nor flames with wrath; unjuſtly does thy vengeance
Purſue Oreſtes; ſuch I now behold
Thy threat'ning mien, to others more benign.
But Pallas, righteous queen, ſhall judge this cauſe.

CHORUS.

But never, never will I quit this man.

APOLLO.

Purſue him then; to toil add fruitleſs toil.

CHORUS.

Think not thy words ſhall make my rage relent.

APOLLO.

Shall thy rage touch him? No; I brook it not.

CHORUS.

At Jove's high throne thou art reputed great:
Yet, ſince a mother's blood calls loud for vengeance,
My keen purſuit ſhall trace him ſtep by ſtep.

APOLLO.

To me his vows are paid; I will aſſiſt,
And ſet him free: for dreadfull were the wrath
'Mongſt Gods and men, ſhou'd I betray my ſuppliant.

CHORUS.

That moves not me.—Theſe are his marks; obſerve them,
Unerring guides, tho' tongueleſs: follow, follow,
And, like the hound that by the drops of blood
Traces the wounded hind, let us purſue him.

The Scene changes to the Temple of Minerva at Athens.

ORESTES.

Hither, divine Minerva, by the mandate
Of Phœbus am I come. Propitious pow'r,
Receive me by the Furies' tort'ring rage
Purſued, no vile unhallow'd wretch, nor ſtain'd
With guilty blood, but worn with toil, and ſpent
With many' a painfull ſtep to other ſhrines,
And in the paths of men. By land, by ſea
Wearied alike, obedient to the voice,
The oracles of Phœbus, I approach
Thy ſhrine, thy ſtatue, Goddeſs; here to fix
My ſtand, till judgement ſhall decide my cauſe.

[Here the Furies enter.]

CHORUS.

Theſe toils oppreſs me, as with breathleſs haſte
I urge the keen purſuit: o'er the long tract
Of continent, and o'er th' extended ocean,
Swift as the flying ſhip I hold my courſe,
Tho' on no pennons born.—There, there he ſtands,

His

His ſpeed outſtripping mine. Have I then found thee?
With joy I ſnuff the ſcent of human blood.—
Take heed, take heed; keep carefull watch; nor let
This murderer of his mother once more 'ſcape,
By ſecret flight, your vengeance: trembling, weak,
He hangs upon the image of the Goddeſs,
And wiſhes to be clear'd of his baſe deeds.
It may not be: no: when the fluent moiſture
Is ſunk into the ground, 'tis loſt for ever:
Can then a mother's blood, ſpilt on the ear h,
Be from the earth recover'd? No. Thy hour
Of ſuff'ring is arriv'd, the hour that gives
The purple ſtream, that warms thy heart, to quench
My thirſt, which burns to quaff thy blood, and bend
To the dark realms below thy waſted limbs;
There, for thy mother's murder, ſhalt thou learn
To taſt of pain; there ſee whatever mortal
Dar'd an injurious deed, profaned the Gods,
Attack'd with ruffian violence the ſtranger,
Or rais'd his impious hand againſt a parent,
Each with vindictive pains condemn'd to groan,
His crimes requiting; for beneath the earth

The awefull Judge of mortals Pluto ſits,
And with relentleſs Juſtice marks their deeds.

ORESTES.

Train'd in affliction's rigid lore, I know
Many ablutions: when to ſpeak I know,
When to be ſilent: inſpiration now
With heav'nly wiſdom prompts my tongue to plead.
The faded blood is vaniſh'd from my hands,
Nor from my mother's ſlaughter leaves a ſtain;
The recent crimſon at Apollo's ſhrine
Waſh'd off with lavers pure, with offer'd victims
Aton'd. This honeſt prelude might be graced
With many' an argument: nor came I hither
Conſorted with a vile and impious band.
All things with time grow old, and wear away.
And now from hallow'd lips my pious pray'r
Invokes the pow'r preſiding o'er this realm,
Royal Minerva, that ſhe haſte to aid
Her ſuppliant: ſo with voluntary zeal
Myſelf, my country, all the Argive people,
To her with juſtice I devote for ever.
If in the coaſts of Libya, on the banks

Of Triton, native ſtream, ſhe ſets her foot
Or bare, or buſkin'd, prompt to aid her friends;
If o'er the plains of Phlegra, like a chief
That marſhals his bold troops, ſhe darts her eye,
Her preſence I implore; tho' diſtant far,
The Goddeſs hears; to free me from theſe ills.

CHORUS.

No: not Apollo, nor Minerva's pow'r
Shall ſet thee free, but that an abject outcaſt
Thou drag thy ſteps, ſeeking in vain to find
Reſt to thy joyleſs ſoul, exhauſted, worn,
A lifeleſs ſhadow. Yet thy pride replies not,
Me, and my threats deſpiſing, tho' to me
Devoted, my rich victim, and alive
To feed my rage, not offer'd on the altar.
Hear now the potent ſtrain, that charms thee mine.

PROSODE.

Quickly, ſiſters, ſtand around,
Raiſe your choral warblings high;
Since, the guilty ſoul to wound,
Swells the horrid harmony.

Since

Since to mortal man we ſhow
How we give his fate to flow;
Since our will his doom ordains,
Show that juſtice 'mongſt us reigns.
He, whoſe hands from guilt are pure,
Stands in innocence ſecure;
And from youth to honour'd age
Fears not our vindictive rage.
To the wretch, that ſtrives to hide
Ruffian hands with murder died,
Cloath'd in terrors we appear,
Unrelentingly ſevere;
And, faithfull to the injur'd dead,
Pour our vengeance on his head.

STROPHE 1.

Hear me, dread parent, ſable-veſted night,
O hear th' avenger of each impious deed;
Whether we lie in ſhades conceal'd,
Or to the eye of day reveal'd!
Seeſt thou how Phœbus robs me of my right,
From my juſt rage the trembling victim freed,

Deſtin'd his mother's death t' atone,
And for her blood to ſhed his own!
O'er my victim raiſe the ſtrain,
And let the diſmal ſound
His tortur'd boſom wound,
And to frenzy fire his brain.
Silent be the ſilver ſhell,
Whilſt we chaunt the potent ſpell;
Then yelling bid th' infernal deſcant roll,
To harrow up his ſoul.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

Avenging Fate, as bending o'er the loom
She wove the web, to us this part aſſign'd,
" Whoe'er the laws ſhall dare diſdain,
" And his rude hand with murder ſtain,
" Purſue him Furies, urge his rigorous doom,
" Till refuge in the realms below he find."
E'en there not free; my chaſt'ning pow'r
Purſues him to that dreary ſhore.
O'er my victim raiſe the ſtrain,
And let the diſmal ſound
His tortur'd boſom wound,

And

And to frenzy fire his brain.
Silent be the ſilver ſhell,
Whilſt we chaunt the potent ſpell;
Then yelling bid th' infernal deſcant roll,
To harrow up his ſoul.

STROPHE 2.

This taſk aſſign'd us at our natal hour,
Far from th' immortal Gods our ſteps we bend:
Nor welcome at the ſocial feaſt,
Nor honour'd with a ſplendent veſt;
For mine I proudly claim the dreadfull pow'r
From its firm baſe the ruin'd houſe to rend,
When in calm peace its ruthleſs lord
Diſtains with a friend's blood his ſword.
Him, tho' ſtrong, we ruſh to ſeize;
And for the new-pour'd blood
Demand his purple flood,
Glorying in the ſacrifice;
Duteous haſt'ning to remove
Cares like theſe from angry Jove;
And ſpare, whilſt fierce for blood my vengeance flies,
The terrors of the ſkies.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

His wrathfull eye Heav'n's mighty monarch rolls,
Awefully ſilent, on this blood-ſtain'd race.
But all the gorgeous blaze of pow'r,
Which trembling mortals here adore,
When, mantled in theſe ſable-ſhaded ſtoles,
With blood-beſprinkled feet we urge the chace,
Sinks darkling to th' infernal ſhades,
And all its boaſted glory fades.
Near him, as he flies, I bound,
And when, with guilt oppreſt,
His weary ſteps wou'd reſt,
Spurn him headlong to the ground.
Senſeleſs he, perchance, and blind,
Such the frenzy of his mind,
Such the deep gloom guilt ſpreads around his walls,
He knows not that he falls.

EPODE.

But ſhall ſhelt'ring wall or gloom
That from dark'ning guilt is ſpread,
Hide him from his rigorous doom,
Or protect his deſtin'd head?

Mine

Mine the vengeance to deſign,
And to ſtamp it deep is mine.
Sternly mindfull of the crime,
Nor by man appeas'd, nor time,
When the wretch, whoſe deed unbleſt
Dares profane high Heav'n's beheſt,
Tho' conceal'd from mortal eyes
Thro' the ſunleſs darkneſs flies,
We purſue the rugged chace,
And his dubious footſteps trace.
Hear then, guilty mortals, hear,
And the righteous Gods revere;
Hear the taſk to me aſſign'd,
Fate the firm decree ſhall bind;
Mine the prize of old ordain'd,
Never with diſhonour ſtain'd,
Tho' my drear abode profound
Night and darkneſs cover round.

MINERVA, ORESTES, CHORUS.

MINERVA.

It was a voice that call'd me; diſtant far

I heard

I heard it, where Scamander laves the fields
My antient right: to me the Grecian chiefs
With voluntary zeal aſſign'd this portion
Of their rich conqueſt, ever to be mine,
Selected as a gift to the brave race
Of Theſeus. With a ſpeed that equals wings
My vig'rous ſteeds thence whirl'd my car, the wind
Againſt my ægis ruſtling as I paſs'd.
But who are theſe conſorted here? Mine eye
Views them unterrified; but much I marvel.
What, and whence are you? To you all I ſpeak,
To him, the ſtranger, ſeated at my image,
And you, whoſe hideous ſhape reſembles nought
Of mortal race, nor Goddeſſes in Heav'n
Seen by the Gods, nor like the human form.
But the deform'd to taunt with obloquy
Is unbeſeeming, juſtice ſtarts at it.

CHORUS.

Daughter of Jove, take our report in brief.
We are the gloomy progeny of night,
Call'd Furies in the drear abodes below.

MINERVA.

MINERVA.

I know your race, and aptly added titles.

CHORUS.

Soon ſhalt thou learn my honours, and my office.

MINERVA.

Speak clearly then, without perplexing preface.

CHORUS.

'Tis ours to drive the murd'rers from the houſe.

MINERVA.

This all the vengeance to their guilt aſſign'd?

CHORUS.

Where they ſhall never taſt or peace or joy.

MINERVA.

And does thy yelling voice thus drive HIM out?

CHORUS.

He dared to be the murd'rer of his mother.

MINERVA.

Urg'd by the force of no neceſſity?

CHORUS.

What force cou'd urge the wretch to kill his mother?

MINERVA.

He hears but half, that hears one party only.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

He wou'd refuſe an oath, nor dares propoſe it.

MINERVA.

Thy aim ſeems rather to obtain the fame
Of juſtice, than to execute her laws.

CHORUS.

How ſo? Inform me; thou art rich in wiſdom.

MINERVA.

Deeds of injuſtice are not clear'd by oaths.

CHORUS.

Hear thou the cauſe, and judge with righteous juſtice.

MINERVA.

Reſts the deciſion of the cauſe on me?

CHORUS.

We reverence thee as worthieſt 'midſt the worthy.

MINERVA.

Say, ſtranger, what can'ſt thou reply to this?
Speak firſt thy race, thy country, thy misfortunes;
Then urge thy plea againſt this accuſation;
If truſting in the juſtice of thy cauſe,
Thus ſeated near my altar, thou embrace
With reverend hands, a ſuppliant as Ixion,

My

My ſtatue. Be thy anſwer ſhort and clear.

ORESTES.

Royal Minerva, let me firſt remove
What thy laſt words, with much concern, ſuggeſt.
I am not ſtain'd with blood, nor ſhall my hand
Pollute thy ſtatue: what I urge in proof
Bears ſtrong conviction. Him, whoſe hands are red
With blood, the laws forbid to plead his cauſe,
Till with its flowing gore the new-ſlain victim
Has made atonement, and the cleanſing wave
Reſtor'd his purity. In other ſhrines
Long ſince theſe hallow'd rites have been perform'd
With offer'd victims and the fluent ſtream.
Blameleſs of this offence, I next declare
My race: An Argive: nor to thee unknown
My ſire, the leader of the naval hoſts,
The royal Agamemnon; for with him
Thy conquering hand laid the proud walls of Troy
In duſt: returning to his houſe he periſh'd
By deeds of baſeneſs; for my dark-ſoul'd mother
With various trains in private murder'd him;
Th' enſanguin'd bath atteſted the foul deed.

I, then an exile, bending back my ſteps,
Slew her that gave me birth; nor ſhall my tongue
Deny the deed; it was a vengeance due
To my lov'd father's ſhade: ſo Phœbus deem'd,
Who urg'd me, and denounc'd heart-rending woes,
Shou'd I ſhrink back refuſing to avenge
The guilt: but if with juſtice, be thou judge.
To thy deciding voice my ſoul ſubmits.

MINERVA.

This is a cauſe of moment, and exceeds
The reach of mortal man: nor is it mine
To judge, when blood with eager rage excites
To vengeance. Thou with preparation meet
Haſt to my ſhrine approach'd a ſuppliant pure,
Without offence; and to my favour'd city
Uncharg'd with blame I readily receive thee.
Let theſe, whoſe ruthleſs rage knows not the touch
Of pity, not ſucceeding in their plea,
Retire awhile, till judgement ſhall decide
The conteſt: from their breaſts black poiſon flows,
And taints the ſick'ning earth. Thus I pronounce
To each, unequal in this dubious ſtrife

To give content to both. But ſince to me
Th' appeal is made, it ſhall be mine t' elect
Judges of blood, their faith confirm'd by oath,
And ratify the everlaſting law.
Prepare you for the trial, call your proofs,
Arrange your evidence, bring all that tends
To aid your cauſe: I from the holieſt men
That grace my city will ſelect to judge
This cauſe with juſtice; men, whoſe ſanctity
Abhors injuſtice, and reveres an oath.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

Confuſion on theſe upſtart laws!
Havoc with haughty ſtride
Shall march, and wave her banner wide,
If venial be this bloody caitiff's cauſe.
Impunity ſhall mortals lead
To ev'ry ſavage deed,
And prompt the ſon with rage unbleſt
To plant the dagger in the parents' breaſt.

I ſmile at all this lawleſs force;
Nor ſhall our dreaded pow'r
In vengeance viſit impious mortals more:
No: let deſtruction take her deſtin'd courſe.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

Whilſt his own anguiſh one ſhall moan,
He hears his neighbour tell,
Appall'd, of deeds as fierce, as fell;
Tear falls to tear, and groan ſucceeds to groan.
Nor ſhall the rolling ſtorm of woe
One gleam of comfort know.
When anguiſh rends the tortur'd breaſt,
Be not to us the mournfull call addreſt.
" Where is your throne, ye Furies, where
Juſtice," the father cries,
Or the pale mother, as in blood ſhe lies:
But juſtice from her throne is exil'd far.

STROPHE 2.

Yet are there hours, when conſcious fear,
And the ſtern eye, that darts
Severely thro' their ſecret hearts,
With ſober counſils check their mad career.

For

For when no ray of heavenly light
Breaks thro' the ſullen night,
Dark deeds enſue, and virtue's pow'r
By man, by ſtate is reverenc'd no more.
Shall he, the wretch that ſcorns controul,
And ſpurns each ſacred law,
Or he that drags his chain with ſervile awe,
Feel the ſweet peace that calms the virtuous ſoul?

ANTISTROPHE 2.

Placed in the midſt does ſtrength reſide.
With an indignant frown
On each extreme the Gods look down;
Injuſtice is the child of impious pride.
But all the joys, that life can know,
From temper'd wiſdom flow.
To juſtice chief thy ſoul incline,
And bow with reverence at her hallow'd ſhrine.
Nor dare, allur'd by curſed gold,
With foot profane and bold
To ſpurn her altars: vengeance waits the crime,
And arm'd with terrors knows her deſtin'd time.

EPODE.

EPODE.

Let each with awe profound
A parent's honour'd name obey:
Each to thy milder voice, humanity,
Attentive homage pay,
When for the ſtranger thou art found
Pleading thy ſtrains of pious potency.
He, that to virtue's heav'nly pow'r
Unforc'd his willing ſoul ſhall bow,
Nor ruin's tyrant rage ſhall know,
Nor keen affliction's tort'ring hour.
But he, that dares her ſacred laws deſpiſe,
Trampling on juſtice to amaſs his prey,
Appall'd ſhall hear the ruſhing whirlwinds riſe,
And tremble at the ſtorms that ſwell the ſea.
Wild with deſpair
He pours his pray'r,
Whirl'd in the giddy tempeſt round;
His blaſted pride
The Gods deride,
And all his daring hopes confound;

Smile,

Smile, as they view him rack'd with pain
Bound in misfortune's iron chain;
As on the pointed rock they ſee him thrown,
To periſh there unpitied and alone.

MINERVA, APOLLO, ORESTES, CHORUS.

The JUDGES ſeated.

MINERVA.

Now, herald, let thy voice to all my people
Proclaim attention: ſound the Tuſcan trumpet,
That its ear-piercing notes may fill the city,
Commanding ſilence, and impreſſing awe
Due to this great aſſembly; that the ſtate
May learn my everlaſting laws, and hear
The righteous judgement that decides this cauſe.

CHORUS.

Royal Apollo, where thy rule extends,
There lord it: but what right canſt thou claim here?

APOLLO.

To give my evidence I come. This man
Is at my ſhrine a ſuppliant, at my ſhrine
He ſojourns; with ablutions pure I cleans'd.

His

His ſtains of blood; and now ſhall plead his cauſe,
Our common cauſe, ſince for his mother's death
Your accuſations reach e'en me: but thou
Urge, as thou canſt, thy plea: open the charge.

MINERVA.

This is incumbent on you; open then
The charge: th' accuſer's voice muſt firſt explain
Clearly thro' ev'ry circumſtance the cauſe.

CHORUS.

Tho' we are many, brief ſhall be our words.
Now anſwer me in order, word for word.
My firſt demand is, Didſt thou kill thy mother?

ORESTES.

I did; and never ſhall deny the deed.

CHORUS.

Firſt of the three this is one ſignal foil.

ORESTES.

Unmov'd I ſtand, and thy proud vaunts are vain.

CHORUS.

Declare it then at once, How didſt thou kill her?

ORESTES.

I drew my ſword, and plung'd it in her breaſt.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

At whoſe perſuaſion? Or by whoſe advice?

ORESTES.

By HIS oracular voice: he will atteſt it.

CHORUS.

The Prophet urge thee to this bloody deed!

ORESTES.

Nor thus far have I to accuſe my fate.

CHORUS.

Far other language the condemning vote
Will teach thy tongue.

ORESTES.

My confidence is firm;
My father from the tomb will ſend me aid.

CHORUS.

Confiding in the dead, he ſlew his mother.

ORESTES.

Her breaſt was ſpotted with a double ſtain.

CHORUS.

What may this mean? Speak, and inform thy Judges.

ORESTES.

She ſlew my father when ſhe ſlew her huſband.

CHORUS.

And yet thou liveſt: from that ſtain ſhe's free.

ORESTES.

Why, whilſt ſhe liv'd, didſt thou not drive her out?

CHORUS.

She had no kindred blood with him ſhe ſlew.

ORESTES.

Is mine allied then to my mother's blood?

CHORUS.

How elſe, before thy birth, did ſhe ſuſtain,
How nouriſh thee? The murd'rous wretch diſowns
That deareſt of all ties, a mother's blood.

ORESTES.

Now let me call thy teſtimony; now
Declare, Apollo, if I ſlew her juſtly:
For that I ſlew her, in ſuch circumſtance,
I not deny: if rightfully, or not,
Decide, that I to theſe may plead thy ſanction.

APOLLO.

To you, the great and reverend counſil here
Plac'd by Minerva, will I ſpeak, and truly;
For never ſhall the God of Prophecy

Pronounce

Pronounce a falſehood; never have I utter'd
From my oracular ſeat to man, to woman,
Or ſtate, ſave what the great Olympian Sire
Shall have commanded. Of his ſovereign juſtice
Learn you the force, and bow to his high will;
Nor deem an oath of greater pow'r than Jove.

CHORUS.

This oracle, thou ſay'ſt, was dictated
By Jove, to charge Oreſtes, whilſt his hand
Was arm'd with vengeance for his father's murder,
To pay no reverence to his mother's blood.

APOLLO.

Of higher import is it, when a man
Illuſtrious for his virtues, by the Gods
Exalted to the regal throne, ſhall die,
Die by a woman's hand, by one that dares not
Bend, like an Amazon, the ſtubborn bow.
But hear me, Pallas, hear me you, that ſit
In awefull judgement to decide this cauſe.
Victorious from the war, with glory crown'd,
And graced with many' a trophy, at the bath
She ſmilingly receiv'd him; there refreſh'd,

As o'er his head he threw the ſplendid robe
Prepar'd t' entangle him, ſhe ſlew her huſband.
So died the chief, the glorious, the renown'd,
The leader of the warlike troops of Greece:
And ſuch I ſpeak this woman, reverend Judges,
To ſtrike your ſouls with horror at her deeds.

CHORUS.

So Jove, it ſeems, reſpects the father's fate;
Yet on his father he cou'd bind the chain,
The hoary Saturn: that his deed gainſays
Thy words: I pray you mark the poor evaſion.

APOLLO.

Deteſted hags, th' abhorrence of the Gods!
He cou'd unbind theſe chains, and the releaſe
Has a medicinal pow'r. But when the blood,
That iſſues from the ſlain, ſinks in the duſt,
It never riſes more. For this my ſire
No remedy admits, in all beſides
With ſovereign pow'r or ruins or reſtores.

CHORUS.

See with what ill-judg'd zeal thy arguments
Labour t' abſolve him! Shall the wretch, whoſe hand

Spilt

Spilt on the earth the kindred blood that flow'd
Within his mother's veins, return to Argos
Lord of his father's houſe? Before what altar,
Sacred to public off'rings, ſhall he bend?
What friendly laver ſhall admit his hands?

APOLLO.

This too ſhall I explain; and mark me well,
If reaſon guides my words. The mother's pow'r
Produces not the offspring, ill call'd hers.
No: 'tis the father, that to her commits
The infant plant; ſhe but the nutrient ſoil
That gives the ſtranger growth, if fav'ring Heav'n
Denies it not to floriſh: this I urge
In proof, a father may aſſert that name
Without a mother's aid; an inſtance ſits
Minerva, daughter of Olympian Jove;
Not the ſlow produce of nine darkling months,
But form'd at once in all her perfect bloom:
Such from no pregnant Goddeſs ever ſprung.
Thy ſtate, thy people, Pallas, be it mine
T' exalt to glory, and what elſe of greatneſs
I know to give. This ſuppliant to thy ſhrine

I ſent,

I ſent, aſſuring his eternal faith;
Thy votary he, and his deſcendants thine,
From ſire to ſon thro' all ſucceeding ages.

MINERVA.

The pleas are urg'd: theſe now I charge to give
Sentence, with ſtrict regard to truth and juſtice.

CHORUS.

We have diſcharg'd our ſhafts: and now I wait
To hear what ſentence ſhall adjudge this cauſe.

MINERVA.

What, am I never to eſcape your cenſure?

CHORUS.

Give what you've heard due weight; and with pure hearts
Pronouncing ſentence reverence your high oath.

MINERVA.

Ye citizens of Athens, now attend,
Whilſt this great counſil in a cauſe of blood
Firſt give their judgement. But thro' future ages
This awefull court ſhall to the hoſts of Ægeus
With uncorrupted ſanctity remain.
Here on this Mount of Mars the Amazons
Of old encamp'd, when their embattled troops

March'd

March'd againſt Theſeus, and in glitt'ring arms
Breath'd vengeance; here their new-aſpiring tow'rs
Rais'd high their rampir'd heads to ſtorm his tow'rs;
And here their hallow'd altars roſe to Mars:
Hence its illuſtrious name the cliff retains,
The Mount of Mars. In this the ſolemn ſtate
Of this majeſtic city, and the awe
That riſes thence ſhall be an holy guard
Againſt injuſtice, ſhall protect the laws
Pure and unſullied from th' oppreſſive pow'r
Of innovation, and th' adulterate ſtain
Of foreign mixture: Shou'd thy hand pollute
The liquid fount with mud, where wilt thou find
The gratefull draught? Let not my citizens
Riot in lawleſs anarchy, nor wear
The chain of tyrant pow'r, nor from their ſtate
Looſe all the curb of rigor: this remov'd,
What mortal man, uncheck'd with ſenſe of fear,
Wou'd reverence juſtice? Let the majeſty,
That here reſides, impreſs your ſouls with awe,
Your country has a fence, your town a guard,
Such as no nation knows; not thoſe that dwell

In Scythia, or the cultur'd realms of Pelops.
This court, ſuperior to th' alluring glare
Of peſtilent gold, this court, that claims your awe
Severely juſt, I conſtitute your guard,
Watchfull to ſhield your country and its peace:
Theſe my commands to ev'ry future age
Have I extended. Now behoves you, judges,
Give teſt of your integrity; bring forth
The ſhells; with ſtricteſt juſtice give your ſuffrage,
And reverence your high oath. This is my charge.

CHORUS.

Nor of their honours rob this train, whoſe pow'r
Is dreadfull in the drear abodes below.

APOLLO.

And be my oracles, the voice of Jove,
Rever'd, nor ſeek to move their firm decree.

CHORUS.

Beyond thy charge protecting deeds of blood,
Nor reverend are thy oracles, nor pure.

APOLLO.

Think of the expiation, which of old
Ixion made for blood: wilt thou arraign

My

My father's counſils there? Or ſlept his wiſdom?

CHORUS.

Thou ſay'ſt it: but if juſtice fails me here,
This land ſhall feel the terrors of my vengeance.

APOLLO.

Unhonour'd thou by ev'ry pow'r of Heav'n,
Or young, or old, to triumph here is mine.

CHORUS.

Such in the houſe of Pheres were thy deeds,
When, won by thy alluring voice, the Fates
On mortal man confer'd immortal honours.

APOLLO.

To aid, to grace the pious, when their pray'rs
Rightly invoke our influence, is juſt.

CHORUS.

What, haſt thou cruſh'd the pow'r of antient Fate,
And wou'dſt thou now delude our honour'd age?

APOLLO.

Soon ſhall thy malice, baffled in this cauſe,
Shed its black venom harmleſs to thy foes.

CHORUS.

Since thy proud youth inſults my hoary years,

I wait th' event in ſilence, and ſuſpend
The fury of my vengeance on this city.

MINERVA.

Laſt to give ſuffrage in this cauſe is mine:
In favour of Oreſtes ſhall I add
My vote: for as no mother gave me birth,
My grace in all things, ſave the nuptial rites,
Attends the male, as from my ſire I drew
The vigor of my ſoul. No woman's fate
Stain'd with her huſband's blood, whom nature form'd
Lord of his houſe, finds partial preference here.
Oreſtes, if the number of the votes
Be equal, is abſolv'd. Now from the urn
Let thoſe among the Judges, to whoſe honour
This office is aſſign'd, draw forth the lots.

ORESTES.

O Phœbus, what th' event that waits this cauſe!

CHORUS.

O Night, dark mother, thro' thy ſable gloom
Seeſt thou theſe things? Now on the doubtful edge
Of black deſpair I ſtand, or joyfull light,
Driv'n out with infamy, or grac'd with honours.

APOLLO.

APOLLO.

Now, ſtrangers, count the lots with righteous heed,
And with impartial juſtice ſever them.
One ſhell miſplac'd haply brings ruin, one
May raiſe again a deſolated houſe.

MINERVA.

He is abſolv'd, free from the doom of blood,
For equal are the numbers of the ſhells.

ORESTES.

O thou, whoſe tutelary pow'r preſerv'd
The honours of my houſe, thou, Goddeſs, thou
Haſt to his country and his native rites
Reſtor'd this exile; and each Greek ſhall ſay,
This Argive to his father's throne returns,
So Pallas wills, and Phœbus, and the God
All-pow'rfull to protect: my father's death
He mark'd ſevere, and looks indignant down
On thoſe that patronize my mother's cauſe,
Firſt to this country, and to this thy people
Thro' time's eternal courſe I pledge my faith,
And bind it with an oath: now to my houſe
I bend my ſteps: never may chieftain thence

Advance againſt this land with ported ſpear.
If any ſhall hereafter violate
My oath now made, tho' then theſe mould'ring bones
Reſt in the ſilent tomb, my ſhade ſhall raiſe
Invinſible diſtreſs, diſaſters, toils,
To thwart them, and obſtruct their lawleſs march,
Till in diſmay repentant they abhor
Their enterprize. But to the ſocial pow'rs,
That reverence this thy ſtate, and lift the lance
In its defence, benevolent ſhall be
My gentler influence. Hail, Goddeſs; Hail
Ye guardians of the city: be your walls
Impregnable, and in the ſhock of war
May conqueſt grace the ſpear that aids your cauſe!

CHORUS.

I burſt with rage. With cruel pride
Theſe youthfull Gods my ſlighted age deride.
And, the old laws diſdaining to obey,
Rend from my hands my prey.
Tortur'd with grief's corroding ſmart,
And taught diſgrace and ſcorn to know,

Diſtilling

Diſtilling from my anguiſh'd heart
The peſtilential drop ſhall flow:
Where'er it falls, nor fruit around,
Nor leaf ſhall grace the blaſted ground;
Thro' the ſick air its balefull dews
A cauſtic venom ſhall diffuſe;
And breathing on this hated race
With deep rough ſcars the beauteous form deface.
Vainly ſhall I heave my ſighs,
Or bid my angry vengeance riſe?
To inſults, which my boſom rend,
Vulgar ſpirits ſcorn to bend:
And ſhall thy daughters, awefull Night, in vain
Of their diſgrace complain?

MINERVA.

Let my entreaties move you; bear not this
With ſuch deep anger; for no conqueſt here
Wounds your inſulted honour: from the urn
The lots came equal, ſo diſpos'd by truth,
To thee no inſult off'ring; and from Jove
Flow'd ſplendid ſigns: he gave the oracle,
He added his high teſt, that for the deed

Oreſtes

Oreſtes ſhou'd not ſuffer. Breath not then
Your heavy vengeance on this land; reſtrain
Your indignation; o'er theſe ſick'ning fields
Drop not your peſtilential dews, nor blaſt
Their glitt'ring verdure, and their ſpringing ſeeds.
And here I pledge my faith, this gratefull land
Shall willingly receive you, raiſe your ſeats
High at their blazing hearths, and, with deep awe
Impreſt, pay reverend honours to your pow'r.

CHORUS.

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Theſe youthfull Gods my ſlighted age deride;
And, the old laws diſdaining to obey,
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Vulgar ſpirits ſcorn to bend;
And ſhall thy daughters, awefull Night, in vain
Of their diſgrace complain?

MINERVA.

No, you are not diſgraced; nor let your wrath,
Immortal as you are, to mortal man
Spread deſolation o'er the earth. I too
Prevail with Jove. And wherefore ſhou'd I ſay
Of all the Gods I only know the keys
That ope thoſe ſolid doors, within whoſe vaults
His thunders ſleep? Of theſe there is no need.
By me perſuaded let thy haſty tongue
Forbear thoſe threats, from which no fruit can flow,
But ruin to the earth: compoſe that rage,
Whoſe ſwelling tide o'erflows all bounds, with me
In the ſame manſion, and with equal honours
Rever'd, enjoying thro' theſe ample realms

The prime oblations, victims doom'd to bleed
For bleſſings on the birth, or nuptial hour,
That thou ſhalt thank me for this friendly counſil.

CHORUS.

Shall I brook this? Shall I then deign
In this curs'd land to ſpend my ſlighted age,
And my loſt honours mourn in vain?
No: be each vengefull thought inflam'd with rage.
Ah me, the keen, the mad'ning ſmart!
Deep, deep it cuts, it rends my heart.
Hear, awefull night, my raving paſſion hear!
Theſe Gods, with a malignant ſmile,
Ah me! my baffled pow'r beguile,
And from my brows the public honours tear.

MINERVA.

Thine anger will I bear with, for thy years
Are more than mine, thy wiſdom more; tho' Jove
Hath with no niggard grace on me beſtow'd
A prudent ſenſe. You yet are ſtrangers here;
But I foreſee, when once your ſeats are fix'd,
Theſe ſcenes will be delightfull, and the flow
Of future years to the inhabitants

Roll

Roll more abundant honours. Where Erechtheus
Rais'd high his regal ſtructures, thou ſhalt hold
Thy reſidence, receiving from the men,
And from the train of females, ſuch high honours
As mortals never paid thee. Caſt not then
On theſe my realms the peſtilent bane, that fires
Beyond the rage of wine the frentic youth
To wild enſanguin'd ſlaughter: in their hearts
Pour not the fury of the creſted cock
Exciting diſcord, broils, and civil war.
To foreign wars, when dangers threaten nigh,
Let glory lead their arms: domeſtic ſtrife
Is hatefull to my ſoul: bethink thee well,
Thou haſt thy choice, by courteſy to win
Returns of courteſy, and reverenc'd high
To ſhare this country gratefull to the Gods.

CHORUS.

Shall I brook this? Shall I then deign
In this curs'd land to ſpend my ſli hted age,
And my loſt honours mourn in vain?
No: be each vengefull thought inflam'd with rage.

Ah me, the keen, the mad'ning ſmart!
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Hear, awefull night, my raving paſſion hear!
Theſe Gods, with a malignant ſmile,
Ah me! my baffled pow'r beguile,
And from my brows the public honours tear.

MINERVA.

I will not yet ſurceaſe to ſpeak thee fair;
And never with juſt cauſe ſhalt thou complain
That with inhoſpitable pride my youth,
And the rude race of mortals dwelling here,
Drove thee, an antient Goddeſs, with diſgrace
An outcaſt from this land. If yet the pow'r
Of mild perſuaſion, dropping from my lips
In words of ſweet and ſoothing courteſy,
Hath not loſt all its virtue, thou wilt ſtay:
If thou diſdain to ſtay, yet not with juſtice
Canſt thou with wrath or vengeance load this town,
Nor on its people ſhed thy banefull dews.
'Tis in thy choice to bleſs this land, and fix
With everlaſting honours here thy ſeat.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

What ſeat, ſay royal virgin, ſhall be mine?

MINERVA.

Where miſery never comes. Aſſent, accept it.

CHORUS.

I do aſſent. What honour now awaits me?

MINERVA.

That, without thee, no houſe ſhall riſe to glory.

CHORUS.

Wilt thou do this, advance my honour thus?

MINERVA.

Him, that reveres thee, ſhall my pow'r protect.

CHORUS.

And ſhall thy word ſtand unimpair'd by time?

MINERVA.

It is not mine to violate my faith.

CHORUS.

Thy words have almoſt ſooth'd me to a calm,
And the high ſtorm of anger dies away.

MINERVA.

The charms of friendſhip here ſhalt thou enjoy.

CHORUS.

Say, with what ſtrains ſhall I ſalute this land?

MINERVA.

Such as, allied to conqueſt, from the earth,
From the rich dews of ocean, from the ſky
Soft-temper'd with the genial ſun, may wake
Ambroſial gales diffuſing o'er this earth
Luxuriance to its fruits, and to its flocks
Prolific vigor, to its peopled towns
Th' unfading glow of health. Be this thy charge;
Mine, in the glorious toils of war to grace
Their fame-ennobled arms with victory.

CHORUS.

Goddeſs, here thy ſeat I ſhare,
Hoſtile to this town no more;
Which the dreadfull God of War,
And the Thund'rer's ſovereign pow'r,

Give the pride of Greece to riſe
Guardian of the rites divine,
Glory of the fav'ring ſkies,
Give to watch o'er freedom's ſhrine.

I too

I too breath the potent pray'r:
May the ſun's ambroſial ray,
Rolling o'er the fruitfull year,
All its richeſt charms diſplay!

MINERVA.

For my lov'd city with a willing mind
This do I, ſeating here theſe awefull pow'rs
That yield with much reluctance; for o'er man
The Fates aſſign them a deſpotic ſway.
And he, that feels their terrors, often knows not
Whence ſprings the vengefull wrath, whoſe iron ſcourge
Embitters life: for the ſire's long-paſs'd crimes
Draw to their chaſt'ning hand the ſuff'ring ſon;
And, 'midſt his thoughts of greatneſs, ſilent ruin
With ruthleſs hate purſues, and cruſhes him.

CHORUS.

O'er their ſaplings ſpreading fair
May no chill wind noxious blow;
Nor the dry and ſcorching air
Singe their freſh buds' opening glow.

For

For my ſake may no diſeaſe
Sicken o'er the blaſted year:
May their teeming flocks increaſe,
And a double offspring bear.

'Gainſt the ſolemn feſtal day
Numerous may their herds ariſe;
Sportive o'er the rich fields play,
Gift of the propitious ſkies.

MINERVA.

Hear this, ye guardians of the ſtate, and know
Her word ſhall be accompliſh'd; for the Gods
That tread the ſpangled ſkies, and thoſe that hold
In the dark realms beneath their ſolemn thrones,
Revere her awefull pow'r; and her high ſtrains
To mortal man in accents dread pronounce
Bleſſings to ſome, to ſome a life of woes.

CHORUS.

May no harſh untimely doom
Sweep the manly youth away;

May the virgins' ripening bloom
Crown with love the bridal day.

You, that to the Fates allied
Claim this juſt and ample pow'r;
You, that o'er each houſe preſide,
Sovereign rulers of each hour;

Goddeſſes, with holy dread
Whoſe high ſtate mankind revere,
Here your ſofteſt influence ſhed,
Here extend your guardian care.

MINERVA.

This ready zeal accorded to my country
Delights me; and with ardor muſt I love
Gentle perſuaſion, that hath tuned my voice
To move them from their ſtern and fierce reſolves.
The pleading voice of Jove hath here prevail'd;
And my warm efforts in the cauſe of mercy
Extend their triumph thro' all future time.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Ne'er may diſcord's hideous pow'r
Here unfated ſtalk its round:
Slaughter ne'er with kindred gore
Madly drench the thirſty ground;

Whilſt revenge in barb'rous pride
Shakes the ſtreets with thund'ring tread,
Blood for blood demands, and wide
Joys the mutual rage to ſpread.

But to union's ſoft command
May their minds harmonious move;
Leagu'd in war, a friendly band;
Tuned in peace to ſocial love.

MINERVA.

So the mild accents of the ſoothing tongue,
Attun'd by wiſdom, win their eaſy way:
And to this people from theſe horrid forms
I ſee much good. With gentle courteſy
Their courteſy requiting, always own'd

By

By acts of higheſt reverence, you, whoſe care
Is watchfull o'er this country and this ſeat
Of juſtice, all ſhall reap the meed of glory.

CHORUS.

Hail, with wealth, with glory grac'd
Citizens of Athens, hail!
Next to Jove in glory plac'd,
Never may your honours fail!

Train'd to wiſdom's ſober lore,
Favour'd with Minerva's love,
Guarded by her virgin pow'r,
Dear thro' her to ſovereign Jove.

MINERVA.

And you all hail? But be it mine to ſhow
The place aſſign'd you for your reſidence.
Go to thoſe ſacred flames, they will conduct you,
And from theſe hallow'd victims ſink with ſpeed
To the dark ſhades below; impriſon there
Whate'er is noxious to theſe realms; whate'er

Has influence to bleſs them, ſend in triumph.
And you, high-lineag'd guardians of the ſtate,
Attend theſe ſtranger-gueſts to their new ſeats,
And be each gentle thought attun'd to good.

CHORUS.

Once more hail, and hail again,
All that here have fix'd your ſeat;
Mortal and immortal train,
Guardians of Minerva's ſtate!

Here your reſidence I ſhare.
To my pow'r due homage pay,
Ne'er ſhall woe or ſullen care
Cloud with grief life's golden day.

MINERVA.

I like theſe votive meaſures; and will ſend
The bright flames of theſe ſplendor-ſhedding torches,
With thoſe that guard my hallow'd image here,
Attendant on you to the dark abodes
Beneath the earth. And let th' Athenian train,

The

The grace, the glory of the wide-ſtretch'd world,
Their manly youth, their virgins' roſeate bloom,
And their age-honour'd matrons, now advance,
Array'd in richeſt veſture darting round
Its vermeil-tinctur'd radiance; let the torches
Blaze, that this ſable troop thro' future times
May ſhine conſpicuous for their friendly aid.

The ATTENDANT TRAIN.

Remove then from this hallow'd fane,
Daughters of Night, remove your virgin train:
With feſtal pomp, and ſolemn tread,
Reverend your awe-commanding ſtate we lead.
Breathing bleſſings o'er this land
Seek your antient caves below,
Leading Fortune in your hand,
Breathing bleſſings as you go.
For you the altars blaze, the victims bleed,
And ſacred honours are decreed;
For you the rich libations dew the ground,
Whilſt torches ſpread their blaze around.

Go, in your glory then rejoicing go;
Go, and lead the Fates along,
Joining in this votive ſong;
Whilſt on this city from his throne on high
Jove propitious bends his eye.
Go then; and as you move your friendly train,
Reſponſive to this warbled ſtrain
Harmonious bid your ſwelling voices flow.

# THE

# PERSIANS.

THE

PERSIANS.

# The PERSIANS.

NO repreſentation can be conceived more agreeable to a brave and free people, than that which ſets before their eyes the ruin of an invading tyrant defeated by their own valour; and no poet could ever claim the right of making ſuch repreſentation with ſo good a grace as Æſchylus, who had borne a diſtinguiſhed part in the real ſcene. Animated by his noble ſubject, and the enthuſiaſm with which he loved his country, he has here diſplayed all the warmth and dignity of his genius, but tempered at the ſame time with ſo chaſtiſed a judgement, that we are ſurpriſed to ſee the infant drama come forth at once with all thoſe graces which conſtitute its perfection; it is like his own Minerva, that ſprung from the head of Jupiter

Then ſhining heav'nly fair, a Goddeſs arm'd.

Beſides this wonderful management of the parts, the poet has the delicacy to ſet the glory of his countrymen in the brighteſt view, by putting their praiſes into the mouths of their enemies. Not ſatisfied with a ſpirited narration of their defeat, and a recital of the many royal chiefs that periſhed in the battle; not ſatisfied with ſpreading the terror thro' all the realms of Perſia, and placing them in a manner before our eyes in all the diſtreſs of deſolation and deſpair, he hath intereſted even the dead, and with the awefull ſolemnity of a religious incantation evoked the ghoſt of Darius

to teſtify to his Perſians that no ſafety, no hope remained to them, if they continued their hoſtile attempts againſt Greece; ſo that his ſublime conception hath engaged Earth and Sea, Heaven and Hell, to bear honourable teſtimony to the glory of his countrymen, and the ſuperiority of their arms.

This tragedy was exhibited eight years after the defeat at Salamis, whilſt the memory of each circumſtance was yet recent; ſo that we may conſider the narration as a faithfull hiſtory of this great event. The war was not yet ended, tho' the Perſian monarch had offered to make the moſt humiliating conceſſions, and the Athenians were inclined to accept them; but Themiſtocles oppoſed the peace. So that we are further to conſider this play in a political light; the poet, by ſo animated a deſcription of the pernicious effects of an obſtinate pride, and by filling the ſpectators with a malignant compaſſion for the vanquiſhed Xerxes, indirectly undiſpoſing his countrymen to a continuation of the war. Thus every thing at Athens, even their ſhows, had a reſpect to the public good. This is the fine remark of P. Brumoy.

The ſcene of this tragedy is at Suſa, before the antient ſtructure appropriated to the great counſil of ſtate, and near the tomb of Darius.

# Perſons of the Drama.

ATOSSA.

MESSENGER.

GHOST of DARIUS.

XERXES.

CHORUS, the Counſil of State.

## Persons of the Drama.

ATOSSA

MESSENGER.

GHOST OF DARIUS.

XERXES.

CHORUS, the Council of State.

# THE PERSIANS.

## CHORUS.

WHILST o'er the fields of Greece the embattled troops
Of Perſia march, with delegated ſway
We o'er their rich and gold-abounding ſeats
Hold faithfull our firm guard; to this high charge
Xerxes, our royal lord, th' imperial ſon
Of great Darius, choſe our honour'd age.
But for the king's return, and his arm'd hoſt
Blazing with gold, my ſoul preſaging ill
Swells in my tortur'd breaſt: for all her force

Hath

Hath Aſia ſent, and for her youth I ſigh.
Nor meſſenger arrives, nor horſeman ſpurs
With tidings to this ſeat of Perſia's kings.
The gates of Suſa and Ecbatana
Pour'd forth their martial trains; and Ciſſia ſees
Her antient tow'rs forſaken, whilſt her youth,
Some on the bounding ſteed, the tall bark ſome
Aſcending, ſome with painfull march on foot,
Haſte on, t' arrange the deep'ning files of war.
Amiſtres, Artaphernes, and the might
Of great Aſtaſpes, Megabazes bold,
Chieftains of Perſia, kings, that to the pow'r
Of the great king obedient, march with theſe
Leading their martial thouſands; their proud ſteeds
Prance under them; ſteel bows and ſhafts their arms,
Dreadfull to ſee, and terrible in fight,
Deliberate valour breathing in their ſouls.
Artembares, that in his firey horſe
Delights; Maſiſtres; and Imæus bold,
Bending with manly ſtrength his ſtubborn bow;
Pharandaces, and Softhanes, that drives
With military pomp his rapid ſteeds.

Others

Others the vaſt prolific Nile hath ſent;
Pegaſtagon, that from Ægyptus draws
His high birth; Suſiſcanes; and the chief
That reigns o'er ſacred Memphis, great Arſames;
And Ariomardus, that o'er antient Thebes
Bears the ſupreme dominion; and with theſe
Drawn from their watry marſhes numbers train'd
To the ſtout oar. Next theſe the Lycian troops,
Soft ſons of luxury; and thoſe that dwell
Amidſt the inland foreſts, from the ſea
Far diſtant; theſe Metragathes commands,
And virtuous Arceus, royal chiefs, that ſhine
In burniſh'd gold, and many' a whirling car
Drawn by ſix generous ſteeds from Sardis lead,
A glorious, and a dreadful ſpectacle.
And from the foot of Imolus, ſacred mount,
Eager to bind on Greece the ſervile yoke,
Mardon and Tharybis the maſſy ſpear
Graſp with unwearied vigor; the light lance
The Myſians ſhake. A mingled multitude
Swept from her wide dominions, ſkill'd to draw
Th' unerring bow, in ſhips Euphrates ſends.

From

From golden Babylon. With falchions arm'd
From all th' extent of Aſia move the hoſts
Obedient to their monarch's ſtern command.
Thus march'd the flow'r of Perſia, whoſe lov'd youth
The world of Aſia nouriſh'd, and with ſighs
Laments their abſence; many' an anxious look
Their wives, their parents ſend, count the ſlow days,
And tremble at the long-protracted time.

STROPHE 1.

Already o'er the adverſe ſtrand
In arms the monarch's martial ſquadrons ſpread;
The threat'ning ruin ſhakes the land,
And each tall city bows its towred head.
Bark bound to bark, their wond'rous way
They bridge acroſs th' indignant ſea;
The narrow Helleſpont's vex'd waves diſdain,
His proud neck taught to wear the chain.
Now has the peopled Aſia's warlike lord,
By land, by ſea, with foot, with horſe,
Reſiſtleſs in his rapid courſe,
O'er all their realms his warring thouſands pour'd;

Now

Now his intrepid chiefs ſurveys,
And glitt'ring like a God his radiant ſtate diſplays.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

Fierce as the dragon ſcal'd in gold
Thro' the deep files he darts his glowing eye;
And pleas'd their order to behold,
His gorgeous ſtandard blazing to the ſky,
Rolls onward his Aſſyrian car,
Directs the thunder of the war,
Bids the wing'd arrows' iron ſtorm advance,
Againſt the ſlow and cumbrous lance.
What ſhall withſtand the torrent of his ſway,
When dreadfull o'er the yielding ſhores
Th' impetuous tide of battle roars,
And ſweeps the weak-oppoſing mounds away?
So Perſia with reſiſtleſs might
Rolls her unnumber'd hoſts of heroes to the fight.

STROPHE 2.

For when misfortune's fraudfull hand
Prepares to pour the vengeance of the ſky,
What mortal ſhall her force withſtand,
What rapid ſpeed th' impending fury fly?

Gentle at firſt with flatt'ring ſmiles
She ſpreads her ſoft enchanting wiles,
So to her toils allures her deſtin'd prey,
Whence man ne'er breaks unhurt away.
For thus from antient times the Fates ordain,
That Perſia's ſons ſhou'd greatly dare,
Unequal'd in the works of war;
Shake with their thund'ring ſteeds th' enſanguin'd plain,
Dreadfull the hoſtile walls ſurround,
And lay their rampir'd tow'rs in ruins on the ground.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

Taught to behold with fearleſs eyes
The whitening billows foam beneath the gale,
They bid the naval foreſts riſe,
Mount the ſlight bark, unfurl the flying ſail,
And o'er the angry ocean bear
To diſtant realms the ſtorm of war.
For this with many' a ſad and gloomy thought
My tortur'd breaſt is fraught:
Ah me! for Perſia's abſent ſons I ſigh;
For whilſt in foreign fields they fight,
Our towns expos'd to wild affright

An eaſy prey to the invader lie:
Where, mighty Suſa, where thy pow'rs,
To wield the warrior's arms, and guard thy regal tow'rs?

## EPODE.

Cruſh'd beneath th' aſſailing foe
Her golden head muſt Ciſſia bend;
Whilſt her pale virgins, frentic with deſpair,
Thro' all her ſtreets awake the voice of woe;
And flying with their boſoms bare
Their purfled ſtoles in anguiſh rend:
For all her youth in martial pride,
Like bees that, cluſt'ring round their king,
Their dark-embodied ſquadrons bring,
Attend their ſcepter'd monarch's ſide,
And ſtretch acroſs the watry way
From ſhore to ſhore their long array.
The Perſian dames with many' a tender fear
In grief's ſad vigils keep the midnight hour;
Shed on the widow'd couch the ſtreaming tear,
And the long abſence of their loves deplore.

Each lonely matron feels her penſive breaſt,
Throb with deſire, with aching fondneſs glow,
Since in bright arms her daring warrior dreſt
Left her to languiſh in her love-lorn woe.

CHORUS.

Now ye grave Perſians, that your honour'd ſeats
Hold in this antient houſe, with prudent care
And deep deliberation, ſo the ſtate
Requires, conſult we, pond'ring the event
Of this great war, which our imperial lord,
The mighty Xerxes from Darius ſprung,
The ſtream of whoſe rich blood flows in our veins,
Leads againſt Greece; whether his arrowy ſhow'r
Shot from the ſtrong-braced bow, or the huge ſpear
High brandiſh'd, in the deathfull field prevails.
But ſee, the monarch's mother: like the Gods
Her luſtre blazes on our eyes: My queen,
Proſtrate I fall before her: All advance
With reverence, and in duteous phraſe addreſs her.

Whole CHORUS.

Hail queen, of Perſia's high-zoned dames ſupreme,

Age-honour'd

Age-honour'd mother of the potent Xerxes,
Imperial conſort of Darius, hail!
The wife, the mother of the Perſians' God,
If yet our former glories fade not from us.

ATOSSA.

And therefore am I come, leaving my houſe
That ſhines with gorgeous ornaments and gold,
Where in paſt days Darius held with me
His royal reſidence. With anxious care
My heart is tortur'd: I will tell you, friends,
My thoughts, not otherwiſe devoid of fear,
Leſt mighty wealth with haughty foot o'erturn
And trample in the duſt that happineſs,
Which, not unbleſs'd by Heav'n, Darius rais'd.
For this with double force unquiet thoughts
Paſt utterance fill my ſoul; that neither wealth
With all its golden ſtores, where men are wanting,
Claims reverence; nor the light, that beams from pow'r,
Shine on the man, whom wealth diſdains to grace.
The golden ſtores of wealth indeed are ours;
But for the light, ſuch in the houſe I deem
The preſence of its lord, there I have fears.

Adviſe

Adviſe me then you, whoſe experienc'd age
Supports the ſtate of Perſia: prudence guides
Your counſils, always kind and faithfull to me.

CHORUS.

Speak, royal lady, what thy will, aſſur'd
We want no ſecond bidding, where our pow'r
In word or deed waits on our zeal: our hearts
In this with honeſt duty ſhall obey thee.

ATOSSA.

Oft, ſince my ſon hath march'd his mighty hoſt
Againſt th' Ionians, warring to ſubdue
Their country, have my ſlumbers been diſturb'd
With dreams of dread portent; but moſt laſt night,
With marks of plaineſt proof. I'll tell thee then,
Methought two women ſtood before my eyes
Gorgeouſly veſted, one in Perſian robes
Adorn'd, the other in the Doric garb.
With more than mortal majeſty they mov'd,
Of peerleſs beauty; ſiſters too they ſeem'd,
Tho' diſtant each from each they chanc'd to dwell,
In Greece the one, on the barbaric coaſt
The other. 'Twixt them ſoon diſſention roſe:

My

My ſon then haſted to compoſe their ſtrife,
Sooth'd them to fair accord, beneath his car
Yokes them, and reins their harneſs'd necks. The one,
Exulting in her rich array, with pride
Arching her ſtately neck, obey'd the reins;
The other with indignant fury ſpurn'd
The car, and daſh'd it piecemeal, rent the reins,
And tore the yoke aſunder: down my ſon
Fell from the ſeat, and inſtant at his ſide
His father ſtands, Darius, at his fall
Impreſs'd with pity: him when Xerxes ſaw,
Glowing with grief and ſhame he rends his robes.
This was the dreadfull viſion of the night.
When I aroſe, in the ſweet-flowing ſtream
I bath'd my hands, and on the incens'd altars
Preſenting my oblations to the Gods
T' avert theſe ills, an eagle I behold
Fly to the Altar of the Sun: aghaſt
I ſtood, my friends, and ſpeechleſs; when an hawk
With eager ſpeed runs thither, furious cuffs
The eagle with his wings, and with his talons
Unplumes his head; mean time th' imperial bird

Cow'rs to the blows defenceleſs. Dreadfull this
To me that ſaw it, and to you that hear.
My ſon, let conqueſt crown his arms, wou'd ſhine
With dazzling glory; but ſhou'd fortune frown,
The ſtate indeed preſumes not to arraign
His ſovereignty, yet how, his honour loſt,
How ſhall he ſway the ſceptre of this land?

CHORUS.

We wou'd not, royal lady, ſink thy ſoul
With fear in the exceſs, nor raiſe it high
With confidence. Go then, addreſs the Gods;
If thou haſt ſeen ought ill, entreat their pow'r
T' avert that ill, and perfect ev'ry good
To thee, thy ſons, the ſtate, and all thy friends.
Then to the earth, and to the mighty dead
Behoves thee pour libations; gently call
Him that was once thy huſband, whom thou ſaw'ſt
In viſions of the night; entreat his ſhade
From the deep realms beneath to ſend to light
Triumph to thee, and to thy ſon; whate'er
Bears other import, to enwrap, to hide it
Cloſe in the covering earth's profoundeſt gloom.

This,

This, in the preſage of my thoughts that flow
Benevolent to thee, have I propos'd;
And all, we truſt, ſhall be ſucceſsfull to thee.

ATOSSA.

Thy friendly judgement firſt hath placed theſe dreams
In a fair light, confirming the event
Benevolent to my ſon, and to my houſe.
May all the good be ratified! Theſe rites
Shall, at thy bidding, to the Pow'rs of Heav'n,
And to the manes of our friends, be paid
In order meet, when I return: mean while
Indulge me, friends, who wiſh to be inform'd
Where, in what clime, the tow'rs of Athens riſe.

CHORUS.

Far in the weſt, where ſets th' imperial ſun.

ATOSSA.

Yet my ſon will'd the conqueſt of this town.

CHORUS.

May Greece thro' all her ſtates bend to his pow'r,

ATOSSA.

Send they embattled numbers to the field?

CHORUS.

A force, that to the Medes hath wrought much woe.

ATOSSA.

Have they ſufficient treaſures in their houſes?

CHORUS.

Their rich earth yields a copious fount of ſilver.

ATOSSA.

From the ſtrong bow wing they the barbed ſhaft?

CHORUS.

They graſp the ſtout ſpear, and the maſſy ſhield.

ATOSSA.

What monarch reigns, whoſe pow'r commands their ranks?

CHORUS.

Slaves to no lord, they own no kingly pow'r.

ATOSSA.

How can they then reſiſt th' invading foe?

CHORUS.

As to ſpread havoc thro' the numerous hoſt,
That round Darius form'd their glitt'ring files.

ATOSSA.

Thy words ſtrike deep, and wound the parent's breaſt,
Whoſe ſons are march'd to ſuch a dangerous field.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

But, if I judge aright, thou ſoon ſhalt hear
Each circumſtance; for this way, mark him, ſpeeds
A Perſian meſſenger: he bears, be ſure,
Tidings of high import, or good or ill.

ATOSSA, CHORUS, MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Woe to the towns thro' Aſia's peopled realms!
Woe to the land of Perſia, once the port
Of boundleſs wealth, how is thy glorious ſtate
Vaniſh'd at once, and all thy ſpreading honours
Fall'n, loſt! Ah me! unhappy is his taſk
That bears unhappy tidings: but conſtraint
Compells me to relate this tale of woe.
Perſians, the whole barbaric hoſt is fall'n.

CHORUS.

O horror, horror! What a balefull train
Of recent ills! Ah Perſians, as he ſpeaks
Of ruin, let your tears ſtream to the earth.

MESSENGER.

It is e'en ſo, all ruin; and myſelf,

Beyond all hope returning, view this light.

CHORUS.

How tedious and oppreſſive is the weight
Of age, reſerv'd to hear theſe hopeleſs ills?

MESSENGER.

I ſpeak not from report; but theſe mine eyes
Beheld the ruin which my tongue wou'd utter.

CHORUS.

Woe, woe is me! Then has the iron ſtorm,
That darken'd from the realms of Aſia, pour'd
In vain its arrowy ſhow'r on ſacred Greece.

MESSENGER.

In heaps th' unhappy dead lie on the ſtrand
Of Salamis, and all the neighbouring ſhores.

CHORUS.

Unhappy friends, ſunk, periſh'd in the ſea;
Their bodies, 'midſt the wreck of ſhatter'd ſhips,
Mangled, and rolling on th' encumber'd waves!

MESSENGER.

Nought did their bows avail, but all the troops
In the firſt conflict of the ſhips were loſt.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Raiſe the funereal cry, with diſmal notes
Wailing the wretched Perſians. Oh, how ill
They plan'd their meaſures, all their army periſh'd!

MESSENGER.

O Salamis, how hatefull is thy name!
And groans burſt from me when I think of Athens.

CHORUS.

How dreadfull to her foes! Call to remembrance
How many Perſian dames, wedded in vain,
Hath Athens of their noble huſbands widow'd!

ATOSSA.

Aſtonied with theſe ills, my voice thus long
Hath wanted utterance: Griefs like theſe exceed
The pow'r of ſpeech, or queſtion: yet e'en ſuch,
Inflicted by the Gods, muſt mortal man
Conſtrain'd by hard neceſſity endure.
But tell me all, without diſtraction tell me,
All this calamity, tho' many a groan
Burſt from thy labouring heart. Who is not fallen?
What leader muſt we wail? What ſcepter'd chief
Dying hath left his troops without a lord?

MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Xerxes himſelf lives, and beholds the light.

ATOSSA.

That word beams comfort on my houſe, a ray
That brightens thro' the melancholy gloom.

MESSENGER.

Artembares, the potent chief that led
Ten thouſand horſe, lies ſlaughter'd on the rocks
Of rough Sileniæ. The great Dadaces,
Beneath whoſe ſtandard march'd a thouſand horſe,
Pierc'd by a ſpear fell headlong from the ſhip.
Tenagon, braveſt of the Bactrians, lies
Roll'd on the wave-worn beach of Ajax' iſle.
Lilæus, Arſames, Argeſtes daſh
With violence in death againſt the rocks
Where neſt the ſilver Doves. Arcteus, that dwelt
Near to the fountains of the Ægytian Nile,
Adeues, and Phereſba, and Pharnuchus,
Fell from one ſhip. Matallus, Chryſa's chief,
That led his dark'ning ſquadrons, thrice ten thouſand,
On jet-black ſteeds, with purple gore diſtain'd
The yellow of his thick and ſhaggy beard.

The Magian Arabus, and Artames
From Bactra, mould'ring on the dreary ſhore
Lie low. Amiſtris, and Amphiſtreus there
Graſps his war-wearied ſpear; there proſtrate lies
Th' illuſtrious Ariomardus; long his loſs
Shall Sardis weep: the Myſian Siſames,
And Tharybis, that o'er the burden'd deep
Led five times fifty veſſels; Lerna gave
The hero birth, and manly grace adorn'd
His pleaſing form, but low in death he lies
Unhappy in his fate. Syenneſis,
Cilicia's warlike chief, who dared to front
The foremoſt dangers, ſingly to the foes
A terror, there too found a glorious death.
Theſe chieftains to my ſad remembrance riſe,
Relating but a few of many ills.

ATOSSA.

This is the height of ill, ah me! and ſhame
To Perſia, grief, and lamentation loud.
But tell me this, afreſh renew thy tale,
What was the number of the Grecian fleet,
That in fierce conflict their bold barks ſhou'd dare

Ruſh

Ruſh to encounter with the Perſian hoſts.

MESSENGER.

Know then, in numbers the barbaric fleet
Was far ſuperior: in ten ſquadrons, each
Of thirty ſhips, Greece plough'd the deep; of theſe
One held a diſtant ſtation. Xerxes led
A thouſand ſhips; their number well I know;
Two hundred more, and ſeven, that ſwept the ſeas
With ſpeedieſt ſail: this was their full amount.
And in th' engagement ſeem'd we not ſecure
Of victory? But unequal fortune ſunk
Our ſcale in fight, diſcomfiting our hoſt.

ATOSSA.

The Gods preſerve the city of Minerva.

MESSENGER.

The walls of Athens are impregnable,
Their firmeſt bulwarks her heroic ſons.

ATOSSA.

Which navy firſt advanc'd to the attack?
Who led to th' onſet, tell me; the bold Greeks,
Or, glorying in his numerous fleet, my ſon?

MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Our evil Genius, lady, or ſome God
Hoſtile to Perſia, led to ev'ry ill.
Forth from the troops of Athens came a Greek,
And thus addreſs'd thy ſon, th' imperial Xerxes,
" Soon as the ſhades of night deſcend, the Grecians
" Shall quit their ſtation; ruſhing to their oars
" They mean to ſeparate, and in ſecret flight
" Seek ſafety." At theſe words the royal chief,
Little conceiving of the wiles of Greece
And Gods averſe, to all the naval leaders
Gave his high charge, " Soon as yon' ſun ſhall ceaſe
" To dart his radiant beams, and dark'ning night
" Aſcends the temple of the ſky, arrange
" In three diviſions your well-order'd ſhips,
" And guard each paſs, each out-let of the ſeas:
" Others enring around this rocky iſle
" Of Salamis: Shou'd Greece eſcape her fate,
" And work her way by ſecret flight, your heads
" Shall anſwer the neglect." This harſh command
He gave, exulting in his mind, nor knew
What Fate deſign'd. With martial diſcipline

And prompt obedience, ſnatching a repaſt,
Each mariner fix'd well his ready oar.
Soon as the golden ſun was ſet, and night
Advanc'd, each train'd to ply the daſhing oar
Aſſum'd his ſeat; in arms each warrior ſtood,
Troop chearing troop thro' all the ſhips of war.
Each to th' appointed ſtation ſteers his courſe;
And thro' the night his naval force each chief
Fix'd to ſecure the paſſes. Night advanc'd,
But not by ſecret flight did Greece attempt
T' eſcape. The morn, all beauteous to behold,
Drawn by white ſteeds bounds o'er th' enlighten'd earth;
At once from ev'ry Greek with glad acclaim
Burſt forth the ſong of war, whoſe lofty notes
The echo of the iſland rocks return'd,
Spreading diſmay thro' Perſia's hoſts thus fallen
From their high hopes; no flight this ſolemn ſtrain
Portended, but deliberate valour bent
On daring battle; whilſt the trumpet's ſound
Kindled the flames of war. But when their oars,
The Pæan ended, with impetuous force
Daſh'd the reſounding ſurges, inſtant all

Ruſh'd

Ruſh'd on in view; in orderly array
The ſquadron on the right firſt led, behind
Rode their whole fleet; and now diſtinct we heard
From ev'ry part this voice of exhortation,
" Advance, ye ſons of Greece, from thraldom ſave
" Your country, ſave your wives, your children ſave,
" The temples of your Gods, the ſacred tombs
" Where reſt your honour'd anceſtors; this day
" The common cauſe of all demands your valour."
Meantime from Perſia's hoſts the deep'ning ſhout
Anſwer'd their ſhout; no time for cold delay;
But ſhip 'gainſt ſhip its brazen beak impell'd.
Firſt to the charge a Grecian galley ruſh'd;
Ill the Phœnician bore the rough attack,
Its ſculptur'd prow all ſhatter'd. Each advanc'd
Daring an oppoſite. The deep array
Of Perſia at the firſt ſuſtain'd th' encounter;
But their throng'd numbers, in the narrow ſeas
Confin'd, want room for action; and depriv'd
Of mutual aid beaks claſh with beaks, and each
Breaks all the other's oars: with ſkill diſpos'd
The Grecian navy circled them around

With fierce aſſault; and ruſhing from its height
Th' inverted veſſel ſinks: the ſea no more
Wears its accuſtom'd aſpect, with foul wrecks
And blood disfigur'd; floating carcaſſes
Roll on the rocky ſhores: the poor remains
Of the barbaric armament to flight
Ply ev'ry oar inglorious: onward ruſh
The Greeks amidſt the ruins of the fleet,
As thro' a ſhoal of fiſh caught in the net,
Spreading deſtruction: the wide ocean o'er
Wailings are heard, and loud laments, till night
With darkneſs on her brow brought gratefull truce.
Shou'd I recount each circumſtance of woe,
Ten times on my unfiniſh'd tale the ſun
Wou'd ſet; for be aſſur'd that not one day
Cou'd cloſe the ruin of ſo vaſt an hoſt.

ATOSSA.

Ah, what a boundleſs ſea of woe hath burſt
On Perſia, and the whole barbaric race!

MESSENGER.

Theſe are not half, not half our ills; on theſe
Came an aſſemblage of calamities,

That

That ſunk us with a double weight of woe.

ATOSSA.

What fortune can be more unfriendly to us
Than this? Say on, what dread calamity
Sunk Perſia's hoſt with greater weight of woe.

MESSENGER.

Whoe'er of Perſia's warriors glow'd in prime
Of vig'rous youth, or felt their generous ſouls
Expand with courage, or for noble birth
Shone with diſtinguiſh'd luſtre, or excell'd
In firm and duteous loyalty, all theſe
Are fall'n, ignobly, miſerably fall'n.

ATOSSA.

Alas their ruthleſs fate, unhappy friends!
But in what manner, tell me, did they periſh?

MESSENGER.

Full againſt Salamis an iſle ariſes,
Of ſmall circumference, to th' anchor'd bark
Unfaithfull; on the promontory's brow,
That overlooks the ſea, Pan loves to lead
The dance: to this the monarch ſends theſe chiefs,
That when the Grecians from their ſhatter'd ſhips

Shou'd

Shou'd here ſeek ſhelter, theſe might hew them down
An eaſy conqueſt, and ſecure the ſtrand
To their ſea-wearied friends; ill judging what
Th' event: but when the fav'ring God to Greece
Gave the proud glory of this naval fight,
Inſtant in all their glitt'ring arms they leap'd
From their light ſhips, and all the iſland round
Encompaſs'd, that our braveſt ſtood diſmay'd;
Whilſt broken rocks whirl'd with tempeſtuous force,
And ſtorms of arrows cruſh'd them; then the Greeks
Ruſh to th' attack at once, and furious ſpread
The carnage, till each mangled Perſian fell.
Deep were the groans of Xerxes, when he ſaw
This havoc; for his ſeat, a lofty mound
Commanding the wide ſea, o'erlook'd his hoſts.
With ruefull cries he rent his royal robes,
And thro' his troops embattled on the ſhore
Gave ſignal of retreat; then ſtarted wild,
And fled diſorder'd. To the former ills
Theſe are freſh miſeries to awake thy ſighs.

ATOSSA.

Invidious Fortune, how thy balefull pow'r

Hath

Hath ſunk the hopes of Perſia! Bitter fruit
My ſon hath taſted from his purpos'd vengeance
On Athens fam'd for arms; the fatal field
Of Marathon, red with barbaric blood,
Suffic'd not; that defeat he thought t' avenge,
And pull'd this hideous ruin on his head.
But tell me, if thou can'ſt, where didſt thou leave
The ſhips, that happily eſcap'd the wreck?

MESSENGER.

The poor remains of Perſia's ſcatter'd fleet
Spread ev'ry ſail for flight, as the wind drives,
In wild diſorder. And on land no leſs
The ruin'd army, in Bœotia ſome,
With thirſt oppreſs'd at Crene's chearfull rills
Were loſt; foreſpent with breathleſs ſpeed ſome paſs
The fields of Phocis, ſome the Doric plain,
And near the gulf of Melia, the rich vale
Thro' which Sperchius rolls his friendly ſtream.
Achaia thence and the Theſſalian ſtate
Receiv'd our famiſh'd train; the greater part
Thro' thirſt and hunger periſh'd there, oppreſs'd
At once by both: but we our painfull ſteps

Held

Held onwards to Magneſia, and the land
Of Macedonia, o'er the ford of Axius,
And Bolbe's ſedgy marches, and the heights
Of ſteep Pangæos, to the realms of Thrace.
That night, e'er yet the ſeaſon, breathing frore
Ruſh'd winter, and with ice encruſted o'er
The flood of ſacred Strymon: ſuch as own'd
No God till now, awe-ſtruck, with many' a pray'r
Ador'd the earth and ſky. When now the troops
Had ceas'd their invocations to the Gods,
O'er the ſtream's ſolid chryſtal they began
Their march; and we, who took our early way,
E'er the ſun darted his warm beams, paſs'd ſafe:
But when his burning orb with firey rays
Unbound the middle current, down they ſunk
Each over other; happieſt he who found
The ſpeedieſt death: the poor remains, that 'ſcap'd,
With pain thro' Thrace drag'd on their toilſome march,
A feeble few, and reach'd their native ſoil;
That Perſia ſighs thro' all her ſtates, and mourns
Her deareſt youth. This is no feigned tale;
But many of the ills, that burſt upon us

In

In dreadfull vengeance, I refrain to utter.

CHORUS.

O Fortune, heavy with affliction's load,
How hath thy foot cruſh'd all the Perſian race!

ATOSSA.

Ah me, what ſorrows for our ruin'd hoſt
Oppreſs my ſoul! Ye viſions of the night
Haunting my dreams, how plainly did you ſhow
Theſe ills?—You ſet them in too fair a light.
Yet, ſince your bidding hath in this prevail'd,
Firſt to the Gods wiſh I to pour my pray'rs,
Then to the mighty dead preſent my off'rings,
Bringing libations from my houſe: too late,
I know, to change the paſt; yet for the future,
If haply better fortune may await it.
Behoves you, on this ſad event, to guide
Your friends with faithfull counſils. Shou'd my ſon
Return e'er I have finiſh'd, let your voice
Speak comfort to him; friendly to his houſe
Attend him, nor let ſorrow riſe on ſorrows.

STROPHE.

Awefull ſovereign of the ſkies,
When now o'er Perſia's numerous hoſt
Thou bad'ſt the ſtorm with ruin riſe,
All her proud vaunts of glory loſt,
Ecbatana's imperial head
By thee was wrapt in ſorrow's dark'ning ſhade;
Thro' Suſa's palaces with loud lament,
By their ſoft hands their veils all rent,
The copious tear the virgins pour,
That trickles their bare boſoms o'er.
From her ſweet couch up ſtarts the widow'd bride,
Her lord's lov'd image ruſhing on her ſoul,
Throws the rich ornaments of youth aſide,
And gives her griefs to flow without controul:
Her griefs not cauſeleſs; for the mighty ſlain
Our melting tears demand, and ſorrow-ſoften'd ſtrain.

ANTISTROPHE.

Now her wailings wide deſpair
Pours theſe exhauſted regions o'er;
Xerxes, ill-fated, led the war;
Xerxes, ill-fated, leads no more;

Xerxes

Xerxes ſent forth th' unwiſe command,
The crouded ſhips unpeopled all the land;
That land, o'er which Darius held his reign,
Courting the arts of peace, in vain,
O'er all his gratefull realms ador'd,
The ſtately Suſa's gentle lord.
Black o'er the waves his burden'd veſſels ſweep,
For Greece elate the warlike ſquadrons fly;
Now cruſh'd, and whelm'd beneath th' indignant deep
The ſhatter'd wrecks and lifeleſs heroes lie:
Whilſt, from the arms of Greece eſcap'd, with toil
Th' unſhelter'd monarch roams o'er Thracia's dreary ſoil.

EPODE.

The firſt in battle ſlain
By Cychrea's craggy ſhore
Thro' ſad conſtraint, ah me! forſaken lie,
All pale and ſmear'd with gore;——
Raiſe high the mournfull ſtrain,
And let the voice of anguiſh pierce the ſky:——
Or roll beneath the roaring tide,
By monſters rent of touch abhor'd;

Whilſt thro' the widow'd manſion echoing wide
Sounds the deep groan, and wails its ſlaughter'd lord:
Pale with his fears the helpleſs orphan there
Gives the full ſtream of plaintive grief to flow;
Whilſt age its hoary head in deep deſpair
Bends, liſt'ning to the ſhrieks of woe.
With ſacred awe
The Perſian law
No more ſhall Aſia's realms revere;
To their lord's hand,
At his command,
No more th' exacted tribute bear.
Who now falls proſtrate at the monarch's throne?
His regal greatneſs is no more.
Now no reſtraint the wanton tongue ſhall own,
Free from the golden curb of pow'r;
For on the rocks, waſh'd by the beating flood,
His awe-commanding nobles lie in blood.

ATOSSA, CHORUS.

ATOSSA.

Whoe'er, my friends, in the rough ſtream of life

Hath

Hath ſtruggled with affliction, thence is taught
That, when the flood begins to ſwell, the heart
Fondly fears all things: when the fav'ring gale
Of fortune ſmooths the current, it expands
With unſuſpecting confidence, and deems
That gale ſhall always breath. So to my eyes
All things now wear a formidable ſhape,
And threaten from the Gods: my ears are pierc'd
With ſounds far other than of ſong. Such ills
Diſmay my ſick'ning ſoul: hence from my houſe
Nor glitt'ring car attends me, nor the train
Of wonted ſtate, whilſt I return, and bear
Libations ſoothing to the father's ſhade
In the ſon's cauſe; delicious milk, that foams
White from the ſacred heifer; liquid honey,
Extract of flow'rs; and from its virgin fount
The running chryſtal; this pure draught, that flow'd
From th' antient vine, of pow'r to bath the ſpirits
In joy; the yellow olive's fragrant fruit,
That glories in its leaves' unfading verdure;
With flow'rs of various hues, earth's faireſt offspring,
Enwreath'd. But you, my friends, amidſt theſe rites

Raiſe

Raiſe high your ſolemn warblings, and invoke
Your lord, divine Darius: I meanwhile
Will pour theſe off'rings to th' infernal Gods.

CHORUS.

Yes, royal lady, Perſia's honour'd grace,
To earth's dark chambers pour thy off'rings: We
With choral hymns will ſupplicate the pow'rs
That guide the dead, to be propitious to us.
And you, that o'er the realms of night extend
Your ſacred ſway, thee mighty earth, and thee
Hermes; thee chief, tremendous king, whoſe throne
Awes with ſupreme dominion, I adjure:
Send, from your gloomy regions ſend his ſhade
Once more to viſit this ætherial light;
That he alone, if ought of dread event
He ſees yet threat'ning Perſia, may diſcloſe
To us poor mortals Fate's extreme decree.

Hears the honour'd, godlike king?
Theſe barbaric notes of woe,
Taught in deſcant ſad to ring,
Hears he in the ſhades below?

Thou,

Thou, O Earth, and you, that lead
Thro' your ſable realms the dead,
Guide him as he takes his way,
And give him to th' ætherial light of day!

Let th' illuſtrious ſhade ariſe
Glorious in his radiant ſtate,
More than blaz'd before our eyes,
E'er ſad Suſa mourn'd his fate.
Dear he liv'd, his tomb is dear,
Shrining virtues we revere:
Send then, monarch of the dead,
Such as Darius was, Darius' ſhade.

He in realm-unpeopling war
Waſted not his ſubjects' blood,
Godlike in his will to ſpare,
In his counſils wiſe and good.
Riſe then, ſovereign lord, to light;
On this mound's ſepulchral height
Lift thy ſock in ſaffron died,
And rear thy rich Tiara's regal pride!

Great

Great and good, Darius, riſe:
Lord of Perſia's lord, appear:
Thus invok'd with thrilling cries
Come, our tale of ſorrow hear!
Woe her Stygian pennons ſpreads,
Brooding darkneſs o'er our heads;
For ſtretch'd along the dreary ſhore
The flow'r of Aſia lies diſtain'd with gore.

Riſe, Darius, awefull pow'r;
Long for thee our tears ſhall flow.
Why thy ruin'd empire o'er
Swells this double flood of woe?
Sweeping o'er the azure tide
Rode thy navy's gallant pride;
Navy now no more, for all
Beneath the whelming wave ——

GHOST of DARIUS, ATOSSA, CHORUS.

DARIUS.

Ye faithfull Perſians, honour'd now in age,
Once the companions of my youth, what ills

Afflict

Afflict the ſtate? The firm earth groans, it opes,
Diſcloſing its vaſt deeps; and near my tomb
I ſee my wife: this ſhakes my troubled ſoul
With fearfull apprehenſions; yet her off'rings
Pleas'd I receiv'd. And you around my tomb
Chanting the lofty ſtrain, whoſe ſolemn air
Draws forth the dead, with grief-attemper'd notes
Mournfully call me: not with eaſe the way
Leads to this upper air; and the ſtern Gods,
Prompt to admit, yield not a paſſage back
But with reluctance: much with them my pow'r
Availing, with no tardy ſtep I come.
Say then, with what new ill doth Perſia groan?

CHORUS.

My wonted awe o'ercomes me; in thy preſence
I dare not raiſe my eyes, I dare not ſpeak.

DARIUS.

Since from the realms below, by thy ſad ſtrains
Adjur'd, I come, ſpeak, let thy words be brief,
Say whence thy grief, tell me unaw'd by fear.

CHORUS.

I dread to forge a flatt'ring tale, I dread

To grieve thee with an harſh offenſive truth.

DARIUS.

Since fear hath chain'd his tongue, high-honour'd dame,
Once my imperial conſort, check thy tears,
Thy griefs; and ſpeak diſtinctly. Mortal man
Muſt bear his lot of woe; afflictions riſe
Many from ſea, many from land, if life
Be haply meaſur'd thro' a lengthned courſe.

ATOSSA.

O thou, that graced with fortune's choiceſt gifts
Surpaſſing mortals, whilſt thine eye beheld
Yon' ſun's ætherial rays, livedſt like a God
Bleſt 'midſt thy Perſians; bleſt I deem thee now
In death, e'er ſunk in this abyſs of ills;
Darius, hear at once our ſum of woe,
Ruin thro' all her ſtates hath cruſh'd thy Perſia.

DARIUS.

By peſtilence, or faction's furious ſtorms?

ATOSSA.

Not ſo: near Athens periſh'd all our troops.

DARIUS.

Say, of my ſons which led the forces thither?

ATOSSA.

ATOSSA.

Th' impetuous Xerxes, thinning all the land.

DARIUS.

By ſea or land dared he this raſh attempt?

ATOSSA.

By both: a double front the war preſented.

DARIUS.

An hoſt ſo vaſt what march conducted o'er?

ATOSSA.

From ſhore to ſhore he bridg'd the Helleſpont.

DARIUS.

What, cou'd he chain the mighty Boſphorus?

ATOSSA.

E'en ſo, ſome God aſſiſting his deſign.

DARIUS.

Some God of pow'r to cloud his better ſenſe.

ATOSSA.

Th' event now ſhows what miſchiefs he atchiev'd.

DARIUS.

What ſuffer'd they, for whom your ſorrows flow?

ATOSSA.

His navy ſunk ſpreads ruin thro' the camp.

DARIUS.

Fell all his hoſt beneath the ſlaught'ring ſpear?

ATOSSA.

Suſa, thro' all her ſtreets, mourns her loſt ſons.

DARIUS.

How vain the ſuccour, the defence of arms!

ATOSSA.

In Bactra age and grief are only left.

DARIUS.

Ah, what a train of warlike youth is loſt!

ATOSSA.

Xerxes, aſtoniſh'd, deſolate, alone ——

DARIUS.

How will this end? Nay, pauſe not. Is he ſafe?

ATOSSA.

Fled o'er the bridge, that join'd the adverſe ſtrands.

DARIUS.

And reach'd this ſhore in ſafety? Is this true?

ATOSSA.

True are thy words, and not to be gainſaid.

DARIUS.

With what a winged courſe the oracles

Haſte

Haſte their completion? With the light'ning's ſpeed
Jove on my ſon hath hurl'd his threaten'd vengeance:
Yet I implor'd the Gods that it might fall
In time's late proceſs: but when raſhneſs drives
Impetuous on, the ſcourge of Heav'n uprais'd
Laſhes the Fury forward; hence theſe ills
Pour headlong on my friends. Not weighing this
My ſon, with all the firey pride of youth,
Hath quicken'd their arrival, whilſt he hoped
To bind the ſacred Helleſpont, to hold
The raging Boſphorus, like a ſlave, in chains,
And dared th' advent'rous paſſage, bridging firm
With links of ſolid iron his wond'rous way,
To lead his num'rous hoſt; and, ſwell'd with thoughts
Preſumptuous, deem'd, vain mortal, that his pow'r
Shou'd riſe above the Gods, and Neptune's might.
And was not this the frenzy of the ſoul?
But much I fear leſt all my treaſur'd wealth
Fall to ſome daring hand an eaſy prey.

ATOSSA.

This from too frequent converſe with bad men
Th' impetuous Xerxes learn'd: Theſe caught his ear

With

With thy great deeds, as winning for thy ſons
Vaſt riches with thy conquering ſpear, whilſt he
Tim'rous and ſlothfull never, ſave in ſport,
Lifted his lance, nor added to the wealth
Won by his noble fathers. This reproach,
Oft by bad men repeated, urg'd his ſoul
T' attempt this war, and lead his troops to Greece.

DARIUS.

Great deeds have they atchiev'd, and memorable
For ages: Never hath this waſted ſtate
Suffer'd ſuch ruin, ſince Heav'n's awefull king
Gave to one lord Aſia's extended plains
White with innumerous flocks, and to his hands
Conſign'd th' imperial ſceptre. Her brave hoſts
A Mede firſt led. The virtues of his ſon
Fix'd firm the empire, for his temperate ſoul
Breath'd prudence. Cyrus next, by fortune graced,
Adorn'd the throne, and bleſs'd his gratefull friends
With peace: He to his mighty monarchy
Join'd Lydia, and the Phrygians; to his pow'r
Ionia bent reluctant; but the Gods
With victory his gentle virtues crown'd.

His

His ſon then wore the regal diadem.
Next, to diſgrace his country, and to ſtain
The ſplendid glories of this antient throne,
Roſe Mardus: him with righteous vengeance fir'd
Artaphrenes, and his confederate chiefs,
Cruſh'd in his palace: Maraphis aſſum'd
The ſceptre: after him Artaphrenes.
Me next to this exalted eminence,
Crowning my great ambition, fortune rais'd;
In many' a glorious field my glittering ſpear
Flamed in the van of Perſia's numerous hoſts;
But never wrought ſuch ruin to the ſtate.
Xerxes, my ſon, in all the pride of youth
Liſtens to youthfull counſils, my commands
No more remember'd: hence, my hoary friends,
Not the whole line of Perſia's ſceptred lords,
You know it well, ſo waſted her brave ſons.

CHORUS.

Why this? To what fair end are theſe thy words
Directed? Sovereign Lord, inſtruct thy Perſians
How, 'midſt this ruin beſt to guide their ſtate.

DARIUS.

DARIUS.

No more 'gainſt Greece lead your embattled hoſts;
Not tho' your deep'ning phalanx ſpreads the field
Out-numb'ring theirs: their very earth fights for them.

CHORUS.

What may thy words import? How fight for them?

DARIUS.

With famine it deſtroys your cumbrous train.

CHORUS.

Choice levies, prompt for action, will we ſend.

DARIUS.

Thoſe, in the fields of Greece that now remain,
Shall not reviſit ſafe the Perſian ſhore.

CHORUS.

What, ſhall not all the hoſt of Perſia paſs
Again from Europe o'er the Helleſpont?

DARIUS.

Of all their numbers few, if ought avails
The faith of heav'n-ſent oracles to him
That weighs the paſt, in their accompliſhment
Not partial: hence he left, in faithleſs hope
Confiding, his ſelected train of heroes.

Theſe have their ſtation where Aſopus flows
Wat'ring the plain, whoſe gratefull currents roll
Diffuſing plenty thro' Bœotia's fields.
There miſery waits to cruſh them with the load
Of heavieſt ills, in vengeance for their proud
And impious daring; for where'er they held
Thro' Greece their march, they fear'd not to profane
The ſtatues of the Gods; their hallow'd ſhrines
Emblaz'd, o'erturn'd their altars, and in ruins,
Rent from their firm foundations, to the ground
Levell'd their temples: Such their frentic deeds,
Nor leſs their ſuff'rings: greater ſtill await them;
For vengeance hath not waſted all her ſtores,
The heap yet ſwells: for in Platæa's plains
Beneath the Doric ſpear the clotted maſs
Of carnage ſhall ariſe, that the high mounds,
Piled o'er the dead, to late poſterity
Shall give this ſilent record to men's eyes,
That proud aſpiring thoughts but ill beſeem
Weak mortals: for oppreſſion, when it ſprings,
Puts forth the blade of vengeance, and its fruit
Yields a ripe harveſt of repentant woe.

Behold this vengeance, and remember Greece,
Remember Athens: henceforth let not pride,
Her preſent ſtate diſdaining, ſtrive to graſp
Anothers, and her treaſur'd happineſs
Shed on the ground: ſuch inſolent attempts
Awake the vengeance of offended Jove.
But you, whoſe age demands more temperate thoughts,
With words of well-plac'd counſil teach his youth
To curb that pride, which from the Gods calls down
Deſtruction on his head. And thou, whoſe age
The miſeries of thy Xerxes ſink with ſorrow,
Go to thy houſe, thence chuſe the richeſt robe,
And meet thy ſon; for thro' the rage of grief
His gorgeous veſtments from his royal limbs
Are fouly rent. With gentleſt courteſy
Sooth his affliction; for his duteous ear,
I know, will liſten to thy voice alone.
Now to the realms of darkneſs I deſcend.
My antient friends, farewell, and 'midſt theſe ills
Each day in pleaſures bath your drooping ſpirits,
For treaſur'd riches nought avail the dead.

ATOSSA.

ATOSSA. CHORUS.

CHORUS.

These many present, many future ills
Denounc'd on Persia sink my soul with grief.

ATOSSA.

Unhappy fortune, what a tide of ills
Bursts o'er me! Chief this foul disgrace, which shows
My son divested of his rich attire,
His royal robes all rent, distracts my thoughts.
But I will go, chuse the most gorgeous vest,
And haste to meet my son. Ne'er in his woes
Will I forsake whom my soul holds most dear.

CHORUS.

STROPHE 1.

Ye pow'rs that rule the skies,
Memory recalls our great, our happy fate,
Our well-appointed state,
The scenes of glory opening to our eyes,
When this vast empire o'er
The good Darius, with each virtue blest
That forms a monarch's breast,

Shielding his ſubjects with a father's care,
Invincible in war,
Extended like a God his awefull pow'r.
Then ſpread our arms their glory wide,
Guarding to peace her golden reign;
Each towred city ſaw with pride
Safe from the toils of war her homeward-marching train.

ANTISTROPHE 1.

Nor Halys' ſhallow ſtrand
He paſs'd, nor from his palace mov'd his ſtate;
He ſpoke; his word was Fate:
What ſtrong-baſed cities cou'd his might withſtand?
Not thoſe that lift their heads
Where to the ſea the floods of Strymon paſs,
Leaving the huts of Thrace;
Nor thoſe, that far th' extended ocean o'er
Stand girt with many' a tow'r;
Nor where the Helleſpont his broad wave ſpreads;
Nor the firm baſtions' rampir'd might,
Whoſe foot the deep Propontis laves;
Nor thoſe, that glorying in their height
Frown o'er the Pontic ſea, and ſhade his darken'd waves.

STROPHE

STROPHE. 2.

Each ſea-girt iſle around
Bow'd to this monarch: humbled Leſbos bow'd;
Paros, of its marble proud;
Naxos with vines, with olives Samos crown'd:
Him Myconus ador'd:
Chios, the ſeat of beauty; Andros ſteep,
That ſtretches o'er the deep
To meet the watry Tenos; him each bay
Bound by th' Icarian ſea,
Him Melos, Gnidus, Rhodes confeſs'd their lord:
O'er Cyprus ſtretch'd his ſceptred hand:
Paphos and Solos own'd his pow'r,
And Salamis, whoſe hoſtile ſtrand,
The cauſe of all our woe, is red with Perſian gore.

ANTISTROPHE 2.

E'en the proud towns, that rear'd
Sublime along th' Ionian coaſt their tow'rs,
Where wealth her treaſures pours,
Peopled from Greece, his prudent reign rever'd.

With

With ſuch unconquer'd might
His hardy warriors ſhook th' embattled fields,
Heroes that Perſia yields,
And thoſe from diſtant realms that took their way,
And wedg'd in cloſe array
Beneath his glitt'ring banners claim'd the fight.
But now theſe glories are no more;
Farewell the big war's plumed pride:
The Gods have cruſh'd this trophied pow'r,
Sunk are our vanquiſh'd arms beneath th' indignant tide.

XERXES, CHORUS.

XERXES.

Ah me, how ſudden have the ſtorms of Fate,
Beyond all thought, all apprehenſion, burſt
On my devoted head! O Fortune, Fortune!
With what relentleſs fury hath thy hand
Hurl'd deſolation on the Perſian race!
Woe unſurportable! The tort'ring thought
Of our loſt youth comes ruſhing on my mind,
And ſinks me to the ground. O Jove, that I
Had died with thoſe brave men that died in fight!

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

O thou afflicted monarch, once the lord
Of marſhal'd armies, of the luſtre beam'd
From glory's ray o'er Perſia, of her ſons
The pride, the grace, whom ruin now hath ſunk
In blood! Th' unpeopled land laments her youth
By Xerxes led to ſlaughter, till the realms
Of death are gorg'd with Perſians; for the flow'r
Of all the realm, thouſands, whoſe dreadfull bows
With arrowy ſhow'r annoy'd the foe, are fall'n.

XERXES.

Your fall, heroic youths, diſtracts my ſoul.

CHORUS.

And Aſia ſinking on her knee, O king,
Oppreſs'd, with griefs oppreſs'd, bends to the earth.

XERXES.

And I, O wretched fortune, I was born
To cruſh, to deſolate my ruin'd country.

CHORUS.

I have no voice, no ſwelling harmony,
No deſcant, ſave theſe notes of woe,
Harſh, and reſponſive to the ſullen ſigh,

Rude

Rude ſtrains, that unmelodious flow,
To welcome thy return.

XERXES.

Then bid them flow, bid the wild meaſures flow,
Hollow, unmuſical, the notes of grief;
They ſuit my fortune, and dejected ſtate.

CHORUS.

Yes, at thy royal bidding ſhall the ſtrain
Pour the deep ſorrows of my ſoul;
The ſuff'rings of my bleeding country plain,
And bid the mournfull meaſures roll.
Again the voice of wild deſpair
With ſhrilling ſhrieks ſhall pierce the air;
For high the God of War his flaming creſt
Rais'd, with the fleet of Greece ſurrounded,
The haughty arms of Greece with conqueſt bleſt,
And Perſia's wither'd force confounded,
Daſh'd on the dreary beach her heroes ſlain,
Or whelm'd them in the darken'd main.

XERXES.

To ſwell thy griefs aſk ev'ry circumſtance.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Where are thy valiant friends, thy chieftains where?
Pharnaces, Suſas, and the might
Of Pelagon, and Dotamas? The ſpear
Of Agabatas bold in fight?
Pſammis in mailed cuiraſs dreſt,
And Suſiſcanes' glitt'ring creſt?

XERXES.

Daſh'd from the Tyrian veſſel on the rocks
Of Salamis they ſunk, and ſmear'd with gore
The heroes on the dreary ſtrand are ſtretch'd.

CHORUS.

Where is Pharnuchus? Ariomardus where,
With ev'ry gentle virtue graced?
Lilæus, that from chiefs renown'd in war
His high-deſcended lineage traced?
Where rears Sebalces his crown-circled head?
Where Tharybis to battles bred,
Artembares, Hyſtæchmes bold,
Memphis, Maſiſtres ſheath'd in gold?

XERXES.

Wretch that I am! Theſe on th' abhorred town

Ogygian Athens, roll'd their glowing eyes
Indignant; but at once in the fierce ſhock
Of battle fell, daſh'd breathleſs on the ground.

CHORUS.

There does the ſon of Batanochus lie,
Thro' whoſe rich veins th' unſullied blood
Of Suſamus, down from the lineage high
Of noble Mygabatas flow'd:
Alpiſtus, who with faithfull care
Number'd the deep'ning files of war,
The monarch's eye; on the enſanguin'd plain
Low is the mighty warrior laid?
Is great Æbares 'mongſt the heroes ſlain,
And Partheus number'd with the dead?——
Ah me! thoſe burſting groans deep-charg'd with woe
The fate of Perſia's princes ſhow.

XERXES.

To my griev'd memory thy mournfull voice,
Tuned to the ſaddeſt notes of woe, recalls
My brave friends loſt; and my rent heart returns
In dreadfull ſymphony the ſorrowing ſtrain.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Yet once more ſhall I aſk thee, yet once more,
Where is the Mardian Xanthes' might,
The daring chief, that from the Pontic ſhore
Led his ſtrong phalanx to the fight?
Anchares where, whoſe high-rais'd ſhield
Flamed foremoſt in th' embattled field?
Where the high leaders of thy mail-clad horſe,
Däixis and Arſaces where?
Where Cigdagatas, and Lythimnas' force,
Waving untir'd his purple ſpear?

XERXES.

Entomb'd, I ſaw them in the earth entomb'd;
Nor did the rolling car with ſolemn ſtate
Attend their rites: I follow'd: low they lie,
Ah me, the once great leaders of my hoſt
Low in the earth, without their honours lie.

CHORUS.

O woe, woe, woe! Unutterable woe
The Dæmons of Revenge have ſpread;
And Ate from her drear abode below
Riſes to view the horrid deed.

XERXES.

Diſmay, and rout, and ruin, ills that wait
On man's afflicted fortune, ſink us down.

CHORUS.

Diſmay, and rout, and ruin on us wait,
And all the vengefull ſtorms of Fate:
Ill flows on ill, on ſorrows ſorrows riſe;
Misfortune leads her balefull train;
Before th' Ionian ſquadrons Perſia flies,
Or ſinks ingulf'd beneath the main:
Fall'n, fall'n is her imperial pow'r,
And conqueſt on her banners waits no more.

XERXES.

At ſuch a fall, ſuch troops of heroes loſt,
How can my ſoul but ſink in deep deſpair!
Ceaſe thy ſad ſtrain.

CHORUS.

Is all thy glory loſt?

XERXES.

Seeſt thou theſe poor remains of my rent robes?

CHORUS.

I ſee, I ſee.

XERXES.

XERXES.

And this ill furniſh'd quiver?

CHORUS.

Wherefore preſerv'd?

XERXES.

To ſtore my treaſur'd arrows.

CHORUS.

Few, very few.

XERXES.

And few my friendly aids.

CHORUS.

I thought theſe Grecians ſhrunk appall'd at arms.

XERXES.

No: they are bold and daring; theſe ſad eyes
Beheld their violent and deathfull deeds.

CHORUS.

The ruin, ſay'ſt thou, of thy ſhatter'd fleet?

XERXES.

And in the anguiſh of my ſoul I rent
My royal robes.

CHORUS.

Woe, woe!

XERXES.

XERXES.

And more than woe.

CHORUS.

Redoubled, threefold woe!

XERXES.

Diſgrace to me,

But triumph to the foe.

CHORUS.

Are all thy pow'rs

In ruin cruſh'd?

XERXES.

No Satrap guards me now.

CHORUS.

Thy faithfull friends ſunk in the roaring main.

XERXES.

Weep, weep their loſs, and lead me to my houſe;
Anſwer my grief with grief, an ill return
Of ills for ills. Yet once more raiſe that ſtrain
Lamenting my misfortunes; beat thy breaſt,
Strike, heave the groan; awake the Myſian ſtrain
To notes of loudeſt woe; rend thy rich robes,
Pluck up thy beard, tear off thy hoary locks,

And

And bath thine eyes in tears: thus thro' the ſtreets
Solemn and ſlow with ſorrow lead my ſteps;
Lead to my houſe, and wail the fate of Perſia.

CHORUS.

Yes, once more at thy bidding ſhall the ſtrain
Pour the deep ſorrows of my ſoul;
The ſuff'rings of my bleeding country plain,
And bid the Myſian meaſures roll.
Again the voice of wild deſpair
With ſhrilling ſhrieks ſhall pierce the air;
For high the God of War his flaming creſt
Rais'd, with the fleet of Greece ſurrounded,
The haughty arms of Greece with conqueſt bleſt,
And Perſia's wither'd force confounded,
Daſh'd on the dreary beach her heroes ſlain,
Or whelm'd them in the darken'd main.

82

75.g.22(2)

# NOTES

## ON THE

# TRAGEDIES OF ÆSCHYLUS.



42

TO

# Mrs. MONTAGU.

MADAM,

WHEN you firſt expreſſed to me your deſire that notes explanatory of the antient mythology, hiſtory, and cuſtoms might be added to the tranſlation of Æſchylus, it ſurpriſed me that You, who certainly want notes as little as any perſon alive, ſhould be the firſt to aſk for them; and I wiſhed to be excuſed from the taſk as conſcious to myſelf that, though I might be ſo happy as to entertain the Public, I could have no pretenſions to inſtruct it, not preſuming to think that I know more than every one knows, or at leaſt ought to know. Your politeneſs would not admit my plea, but you perſevered in your requeſt; I might more properly call it your command, for as ſuch I ſhall always receive even an hint from Mrs. Montagu. In conſequence of this I have now the honour of preſenting to you ſuch remarks as occurred to me upon a careful review of my author; theſe may poſſibly be of ſervice to the leſs informed reader, and for ſuch notes in general, and even tranſlations, are principally intended. Thus far all may be well; but Your expectations muſt be diſappointed; for ſuch writing is not in its nature amuſing, and you want no information which the writer is capable of giving.

I know that your active mind wiſhes to penetrate through the allegorical covering, which the philoſophers, poets, and prieſts of antient times threw over their phyſical, moral, and theological inquiries; but the boaſt of Iſis yet remains, and no mortal hath removed her Veil. The misfortune is, almoſt all the monuments of Egyptian learning are loſt, and of the Egyptian Gods nothing remains but fable: the light, which we receive upon theſe ſubjects, is chiefly derived from the Greek writers, and this by no means pure; they were indeed enough acquainted with Egypt to acquire from thence a turn for mythologizing, but we may obſerve that it did not always ſit eaſy upon them; ill inſtructed in the antiquities of their own country they have tranſmitted to us a confuſed heap of uncertain traditions; and theſe, by falling into the hands of the poets, are

become ſtill more extravagant; the conſequence of which is, they have multiplied doubts, to which one would willingly prefer the moſt profound ignorance. You would be the more convinced of the juſtneſs and good ſenſe of this obſervation of the learned and excellent M. le Count Caylus, could you bear to read the celebrated treatiſe of Plutarch concerning Iſis and Oſiris, where you would find ſuch a mixture of hiſtory and fable, allegory and explication, reaſoning and abſurdity, as would deter you from further inquiry; yet Plutarch was one of the moſt learned and inquiſitive perſons of his age, and in theſe reſearches he had means of information, which we can never have. Yet for our times theſe diſcoveries ſeem to have been reſerved; we have writers on mythology in abundance; and though they differ in their explications, yet they agree in an unclaſſical diſregard to antiquity and truth, and in a barbarous attempt to demoliſh all the monuments of Egypt and Greece, and with their materials ſome to repair the temple of Jeruſalem, ſome to build up ſyſtems of their own; theſe indeed are un peu bizarres, and what one of them ſays of the others we may with equal reaſon apply to them all, On cherche quelque lumiere, et l'on ne voit qu'amas indigeſte d'une vaſte erudition et l'abus le plus etrange des Langues, que l'on honora fauſſement du nom de Science etymologique. And would you have me venture to tread this treacherous ſoil of mythology? Or have you a wiſh to ſee me pictured, like that great Myſtagogue Alexander Roſs, in the temple of Apollo, my pontifical robe trailing on the pavement, my philoſophical beard waving over my breaſt, my front ploughed with many a deep remark, and a great church-door-key in my hand, which after all opens to no knowledge?

But ſince, notwithſtanding my nolo epiſcopari, you have called me forth to the office of Hierophant, I muſt enter upon it by declaring that whoever he be that wiſhes to give or to form any rational idea of the mythology of the antients, he muſt firſt acquaint himſelf with the religion of the earlieſt ages, its progreſſive corruption through the three greater ſpecies of idolatry, and their mode of repreſenting things by hieroglyphic characters; for from hence aroſe this marvelous entaſſement of mythology, ſymbol, and allegory.

Religion is natural to the human mind, and when the early ages had ſunk to ſuch miſerable blindneſs as to loſe ſight of the true God, who revealed himſelf to their firſt progenitor, they looked up to the heavens, and ſtruck with admiration of the nature of the univerſe, ſuppoſed the Sun and Moon to be the eternal and firſt Gods. The voice of antiquity is uniform in this; the earlieſt account we have is from the Fragment of Sanchoniatho, which tells us that * Æon and Protogonus in times of drought ſtretched their hands to the heavens towards the Sun; for this they eſteemed as God the ſole lord of the heaven. As Diodorus Siculus tells us the ſame thing of the Egyptians, ſo Herodotus gives us a ſimilar account of the antient † Perſians and Libyans; this Hyde calls the firſt interpolation; and ‡ Plato ſays, that the earlieſt Grecians worſhipped the Sun, and

* Αἰῶνα καὶ Πρωτόγονον αὐχμῶν γενομένων τὰς χεῖρας ἐρέγειν εἰς ἠρανὸς πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον. Τοῦτον γὰρ, φησὶ, θεὸν ἐνόμιζον μόνον ἐξανῦ Κύριον.

† Θύσι δὲ Ηλίῳ καὶ Σελήνῃ μώνοισι· τούτοισι μὲν, νῦν πάντες Λίβυες θύσι. L. iv. c. 188.

‡ In Cratylo.

and the Moon, and the Earth, and the Stars, and the Heaven, as many barbarians do now. Thus elementary worſhip was the firſt ſpecies of idolatry.

When men were drawn from a ſavage life to the more civilized ſtate of Society, thoſe virtues

(or in arts, or arms
Diffuſing bleſſings, or averting harms,)

which had made a prince the father of his people, induced them out of gratitude and reverence to deify him after his deceaſe, and to pay him divine honours: thus Sanchoniatho tells us that * when Hypſiſtus was killed by wild beaſts, he was deified, and his children made libations and ſacrifices to him. And in what other ſenſe can we underſtand Heſiod, when he ſpeaks of the ſacred race of the immortal Gods, † which were born of the earth; and of the earth as producing the Heaven, that it might be the ſeat of the immortal Gods? Tully in the firſt book of his Tuſculan Diſputations, arguing for the exiſtence of the Soul after death, proves from the pontifical law, and the inviolable ceremonies of ſepulture, that death is not a privation of being, but a migration of life, which leads illuſtrious perſons to the ſkies; he inſtances in Romulus, and ſays that Rome derived this opinion from Greece; that not only Hercules, Bacchus, Caſtor and Pollux, Leucothea, and their own Matuta, but that even the Dii majorum Gentium would be found, by tracing the antiquities of Greece, to have been advanced from mortals to be Gods. Yet M. Court de Gebelin could aſſure us that antiquity never deified dead men. On a prétendu qu' ils avoient etabli — pour faire voir que ces Dieux etoient tous des hommes qui avoient été déïfiés à cauſe des ſervices qu' ils avoient rendus au genre humain. Mais il faudroit pour que cela pût être adopté, qu' on en trouvât de preuves dans l' Antiquité, ce qui eſt impoſſible, l' Antiquité n' ayant jamais déïfié des hommes. — Monde Primitif, p. 311. — Whatever Antiquity has done in this caſe, his ſyſtem required that it ſhould not have done it; and what can ſtand before a ſyſtem?

Yon' golden Sun blazing in all its ſplendor, the ſilver Regent of the night, the canopy of heaven ſpangled with ſtars, the violence of the winds, the immenſity of the ocean, might aſtoniſh the minds of untutored Barbarians: and if one ſhould be inclined to forgive them for adoring the thundering Jupiter, the majeſtic Juno, the elegant Apollo, the accompliſhed Minerva, the beautiful Venus, the Muſes and the Graces, and ſuch other of their deities as ſhowed their fine taſte at leaſt, if not their good ſenſe; yet what ſhall we ſay to their divine Bull, their divine Heifer, their dog-headed Anubis, and all that herd of monſters which diſgraced the religion of Egypt? Yet ſuch was the depravation of

* Ὑψιστ⊙ ἐκ συμβολῆς θηρίων τελευτήσας ἀφιερώθη, ᾧ καὶ θυσίας καὶ σπονδὰς οἱ παῖδες ἐτελέσαν.

† Κλείετε δ' ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γέν⊙ αἰὲν ἐόντων,
Οἳ Γῆς ἐξεγένοντο. v. 104.

Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγείνατο ἶσον ἑαυτῇ
Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτοι,
Ὅφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἕδ⊙ ἀσφαλὲς αἰεί. v. 125.

of the human mind, that having loſt its ſenſe of the true God, it firſt fixed on elementary worſhip, then deſcended to human, and at laſt ſunk to brutal; though, in juſtice to the inventors of this third ſpecies of idolatry, we muſt obſerve that the animal itſelf was not originally worſhipped, but its figure as ſymbolical of the other two ſpecies. This certainly took its riſe from the Egyptian Hieroglyphics, which were prior to alphabetic writing, and repreſented one thing by another: thus Horns were the ſymbol of Power; hence * Hermes placed on the head of Iſis an helmet formed with the horns of a Bull: and an Heifer being in Egypt the well known ſymbol of Fertility, this their tutelary Goddeſs is repreſented ſometimes as a moſt beautiful woman with the horns of an heifer, ſometimes with the head of an heifer, and ſometimes intirely as an heifer. Hence the Iö of the Grecians.

But a practice, which naturally enough took its riſe from this mode of repreſentation, was afterwards encouraged by the prieſts with a different view. As mankind grew more inquiſitive and more enlightened, they had reaſon to fear that the origin of their hero gods might be detected, which would of courſe greatly weaken the veneration in which they were held, and have a tendency to ſubvert the public religion; but the ſymbolic worſhip, by adding myſtery to their theology, and keeping the truth out of ſight, would at leaſt ſupport, if not increaſe the veneration; therefore the more impenetrable the obſcurity was made, the better would its end be anſwered.

This end was likewiſe effected, and the people were more eaſily reconciled to hero-worſhip by another method, which led them to ſupport the new idolatry on the old, by giving the deified mortal the name of the planet, and inverſely by giving the planet the name of the new god: Thus Oſiris was the Sun, and the Sun was Oſiris. So Sanchoniatho tells us that † Chronus, i. e. Saturn, after his deceaſe, was hallowed into the planet of Saturn; and Plutarch ſays ‡ that the Egyptian prieſts affirm that the bodies of the gods, ſuch as were not of immortal origin and incorruptible, were depoſited with them; but that their ſouls ſhined ſtars in the heaven: ſome therefore expreſsly ſay that Oſiris was the Sun, by the Greeks called Sirius; and that Iſis was the Moon, repreſented under both characters by the ſame image; that her horns were reſemblances of the Moon, and that ſhe was habited in a black ſtole, to denote her occultations, in which ſhe wanders ſeeking the ſun. I have ſomewhere ſeen an image of this Goddeſs, on which the horns are perfectly lunar, and ſo formed that the blank diſc of the moon is faintly ſhadowed within their circle.

And now, Madam, your Hierophant having preſumed to conduct you through theſe probationary labours,

obſcure

* Ερμὴν δὲ περιθεῖναι βέκρανον αὐτῇ (Ισιδι) κράνος. De Iſide et Oſiride.

† Κρόνος —— εἰς τὸν τοῦ Κρόνου ἀστέρα καθιερωθείς.

‡ Οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς λέγουσι τὰ τῶν θεῶν, ὅσοι μὴ ἀγέννητοι μηδὲ ἄφθαρτοι, σώματα παρ' αὐτοῖς κεῖσθαι καμόντα καὶ θεραπεύεσθαι, τὰς δὲ ψυχὰς ἐν οὐρανῷ λάμπειν ἄστρα. —— Εἰσὶ δὲ οἳ τὸν Οσιριν ἄντικρυς ἥλιον εἶναι καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι Σείριον ὑφ' Ελλήνων λέγοντες· τὴν δ' Ισιν ἐκ ἑτέραν τῆς σελήνης ἀποφαίνοντες, ἐν γὰρ τῶν ἀγαλμάτων αὐτῆς, τὰ μὲν κεράσφορα τοῦ μηνοειδοῦς γιγονέναι μιμήματα, τοῖς δὲ μελανοστόλοις ἐμφαίνεσι τὰς κρύψεις καὶ τὰς περισκιασμὰς, ἐν οἷς διάκει σοβοῦσα τὸν ἥλιον. De Iſide et Oſiride.

obſcure through dreary ſhades, that lead
Along the waſte dominions of the dead:
As wander travellers in woods by night,
By the moon's doubtful and malignant light;
When Jove in duſky clouds involves the ſkies,
And the faint Creſcent ſhoots by fits before their eyes.

VI Æn. Dryden.

you are prepared to enter the myſtic dome, where, I hope, you will not be alarmed at the various monſters that preſent themſelves before you; they are empty phantoms all,

Forms without bodies, and impaſſive air.

Neither will you wonder to find them here: every thing is in its proper order. As the human mind advanced in knowledge, theſe ſymbolical repreſentations were too groſs to paſs upon the inquiſitive as proper objects of their religious adoration; the prieſts therefore, who were now deeply intereſted in the craft, and the vanity of philoſophizing, attempted to cover the abſurdity of theſe brute-figured deities by pretending that they were mythological allegories, which veiled all the great truths of theology, ethics, and phyſics. Thus Sanchoniatho, who had told us that Taaut, the Egyptian Hermes, imitating Ouranus, formed the figures of the gods in ſacred characters, (where we find this deity the patron rather of the ingenious Carlini and the goddeſs-making Reynolds, than of Poor Robin and Vincent Wing) tells us alſo * that the ſon of Thabion, the earlieſt Phœnician Hierophant, allegorized all theſe things, and mixed them with phyſical and elementary ideas. In this ſtate they paſſed to the Grecians, whoſe volatile and inventive genius added fable to mythology, and extravagance to allegory, till, as Mr. Bryant expreſſes it, "we find the whole, like a groteſque picture, blazoned high, and glaring with colours, and filled with groups of fantaſtic imagery, ſuch as we ſee upon an Indian ſcreen; where the eye is painfully amuſed; but whence little can be obtained, which is ſatisfactory, and of ſervice." To endeavour to analyſe them, c' etoit employer beaucoup trop d' erudition pour s' egarer. Let us make the attempt on Prometheus, and we ſhall ſoon ſee that M. Court de Gebelin had reaſon enough to make this reflection.

The Engliſh reader is now well acquainted with the hiſtory and character of Prometheus: Æſchylus indeed had the good ſenſe to omit the ſilly tale of the bull's hide and the bones; and Plato in his Protagoras has told his ſtory in the moſt agreeable manner: but where in hiſtory, ſacred or profane, where in religion or in nature ſhall we find this Worthy? Shall we draw him out of Noah's Ark? Shall we yoke him to the plough in Egypt, thence ſend him to a mountain to eſcape the inundation of the Nile, which overſpread his province rapid as

* Θεὸς Τάαυτος, μιμησάμενος τὸν Οὐρανὸν, τῶν θεῶν ὄψεις, Κρόνῳ τε καὶ Δαγῶνος, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν διετύπωσεν τὰς ἱερὰς τῶν στοιχείων χαρακτῆρας. —— Ταῦτα πάντα ὁ Θαβίωνος πατὴς πρῶτος τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος γεγονότων φοινίκων ἱεροφάντης ἀλληγορήσας, τοῖς τε φυσικοῖς καὶ κοσμικοῖς πάθεσιν ἀνεμίξας.

as an *Eagle*'s flight, in deſpair till Hercules repaired the ravages, and taught the river to confine itſelf to its channel? Shall we find him on Mount Horeb in the perſon of Moſes? Or ſhall we take up with any one, or with all the fourteen interpretations of Alexander Roſs? The civilizing, oneirocritic, and medicinal arts, which he boaſts to have taught mankind, ſhow him to have been an Egyptian, they fix him to the age of Oſiris, they even mark him to be Oſiris himſelf; for he was the wiſe and benevolent civilizer, * he reclaimed his Egyptians from their poor and ſavage life, he inſtructed them in agriculture, gave them laws, and taught them to honour the gods. But his name, as well as that of his inconſiderate brother, is purely Greek; and probably he owes his civilizing qualities to the vanity of that people, who had a wonderful propenſity to claim to themſelves the invention of all the arts of poliſhed life. Had we nothing of his ſtory, but what is ſo elegantly related by Plato, we ſhould not heſitate to pronounce him an emblem of the divine providence in the formation of man; and as ſuch we muſt accept it, little doubting but that his chains and the eagle preying on his heart were wild and extravagant fables ſuperadded to the original ſober allegory: no uncommon practice this. Mr. Bryant well accounts for this, when he ſays, "The hiſtory of Prometheus was certainly taken from hieroglyphics miſunderſtood, and badly explained, at leaſt from the ſacred devices upon the entablatures of temples. Prometheus was worſhipped by the Colchians as a deity; and had a temple and high place called Typhaonia Petra upon mount Caucaſus; the device upon the portal was Egyptian, an Eagle over an Heart: the Eagle and the Vulture were the inſignia of that country." — The Heart was another hieroglyphical character. — It were to be wiſhed that this very ingenious and learned gentleman had favoured us with his authority for this intereſting circumſtance; it would have been more ſatisfactory to his readers, though his fidelity cannot be ſuſpected: it were alſo to be wiſhed that he had ſtopped here; for beyond this we have no ſupport from antiquity: neither reaſon nor religion can account for a Story ſo inconſiſtent with both; and of conjectures we have enough: but the ſpirit of mythologizing is gone forth, and all fleſh is humbled in its ſight; gods and men, heaven and earth, the air and the ſea, theology, phyſics, and ethics, and all the monuments of antiquity fall before it;

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the reſounding ſhore,
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
From haunted ſpring and dale,
Edg'd with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with ſighing ſent;
With flow'r-inwoven treſſes torn
The Nymphs in twilight ſhade of tangled thickets mourn, &c.

I promiſed that I would introduce the daughter of Inachus to your acquaintance; and if I have been ſo happy as to explain this one mythological character,

* Βασιλεύοντα δὲ Οσιριν Αἰγυπτίως μὲν οὐθὺς ἀπόρῳ βίῳ καὶ θηριώδει ἀπαλλάξαι, κάρπῶν τε δίξαι, καὶ νόμους θέμενον αὐτοις, καὶ θεὸς δείξαντα τιμᾶν. Plutarch de Iſ. et Oſir.

racter, it has been by a ſober attention to antiquity under the guidance of a right reverend author, whoſe comprehenſive genius has fathomed all the depths of literature. Could I have found any further ſupport from antiquity, any rational ground on which to follow my inquiries, I ſhould have been equally happy to have been able to give you ſatisfaction with regard to the other myſterious perſonages mentioned by Æſchylus: inſtead of this you will give me leave to put you off with a ſtory.

As Socrates one evening was walking with his friend Phædrus on the banks of the Ilyſſus, the young man aſked whether that was the place whence Boreas was ſaid to have carried off the virgin Orithyia: being ſhown the place a little lower down the ſtream, where an altar to Boreas yet ſtood, he ſays, but tell me, I conjure you, Socrates, are you perſuaded that this mythological narration is true? If I ſhould diſbelieve it, as wiſe men do, the philoſopher replies, I ſhould not be guilty of any great abſurdity; then I ſhould ſhow my acuteneſs, and ſay that the violence of the north-wind drove her down thoſe rocks as ſhe was playing with Pharmacia, and that, periſhing there, ſhe was ſaid to have been carried away by Boreas. Thoſe things, my Phædrus, on ſome accounts I think agreeable, but they are the inquiries of a ſtudious, laborious man, and of one not perfectly happy; if for no other reaſon, yet for this, that he would then be under a neceſſity of adjuſting the form of the Centaurs, and next of the Chimera; then flows in a multitude of Gorgons, and Pegaſus's, and ſuch like beings inexplicable for their numbers, and monſtrous in their abſurdity. If any one, who has no faith in theſe, ſhould attempt to give a ſolution of each form, though in no elegant manner, he would find it a work that requires much leiſure: but I have no leiſure for ſuch things: the reaſon, my friend, is this; I am not yet able, according to the Delphic injunction, to know myſelf; and it would be ridiculous for me, whilſt I am ignorant of this, to be inveſtigating things foreign to my own buſineſs and boſom: wherefore bidding farewel to theſe things, and ſubmitting to what is determined concerning them, I conſider what I lately mentioned, not ſuch ſubjects, but myſelf, whether I am a monſter more multiform and more fiery fierce than Typhon; or a tamer and more ſimple animal, in my nature partaking of ſome divine and gentle Portion. Plato's Phædrus.

Socrates tells us that theſe inquiries are not the taſk of a very happy man: the Athenian Philoſopher had his reaſons for ſaying this, but they affect not us: I ſhould be very happy if my inquiries could produce any thing worthy your attention; the ſtudy and the labour I ſhould think well employed. And now, Madam, you ſee how little you are to expect from theſe notes; yet ſuch as they are, as they were written by your command, to you they are dedicated; as your candour has induced you to approve the tranſlation, I can with the better grace preſume to dedicate that alſo to you: the approbation of Mrs. Montagu is the higheſt honour any writer can receive; I am not inſenſible to it; and whilſt I thus boaſt of it to the Public, let me expreſs my humbleſt thanks to you for it.

I am, Madam, with the greateſt reſpect,

Your moſt obedient Servant,

*Scarning, 11th July, 1778.*

R. POTTER.

# NOTES
## ON
# PROMETHEUS.

### PAGE 5.

ACCORDING to the theogony of Heſiod, Chaos was the anceſtor of Nature; next to him was Gaia: her progeny by Ouranus was numerous, amongſt theſe were Oceanus and Japetus: by Clymene daughter of Oceanus Japetus was the father of Prometheus, with whoſe hiſtory the Athenians were well acquainted from the narrative of Heſiod, which was, we may ſuppoſe, the popular creed of the times in which our poet wrote. The Engliſh reader is by this time as well acquainted with this ſtrange ſtory.

### STRENGTH and FORCE.

Theſe two allegorical perſonages were of high antiquity and illuſtrious birth, the ſons of Pallas and Styx. Coeus, the ſon of Ouranus and Gaia, was the father of Pallas by Eurybia daughter of Pontus and Gaia: Styx was the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys. When Jupiter aſſembled the Gods on Olympus, and declared his gracious intention to reward and honour each that ſhould be auxiliary to him in his wars againſt the Titans, Styx, by the advice of her father, was the firſt that attended him, leading with her theſe her two ſons; Jupiter received her with great reſpect, appointed her to be the ſacred oath of the Gods, and admitted her ſons to be conſtant attendants on his own perſon. Heſiod. Theog. v. 400.

p. 6. l. 10.

Themis was one of the moſt ancient and reſpectable deities, the daughter of Ouranus and Gaia, that is, of Heaven and Earth. As ſhe was the ſecond prophetic power that held her oracular ſeat at Delphos, ſhe was honoured as the goddeſs of truth and juſtice.

p. 11. l. 6.

No writer knew better how to preſerve propriety of character than Æſchylus. Prometheus diſdained to anſwer the ferocious inſolence of theſe minſters of Jupiter; nor could even the tender commiſeration of Vulcan elicit a word from him. There is a dignity, and even a ſublimity in this ſilence beyond the expreſſion of words. But as ſoon as the inſtruments of tyranny left him, he burſts into a ſtrain of pathetic lamentation, and invokes all nature to atteſt his undeſerved ſufferings. There is a further propriety in this addreſs; the Winds were the ſons of Nereus and Doris, the Rivers of Oceanus and Tethys, the Sun of Hyperion and Thea, whoſe parents were Ouranus and Gaia: theſe were all kindred Gods, benevolent to Prometheus, and deeply affected with his miſeries.

p. 11. l. 8.

Refertur ad levem ſonum undarum ventis exagitatarum, qui etiam aliquantulum criſpant maris dorſum quaſi amabili quâdam γελασίᾳ. Stanley. The image is here ſo beautifully poetical, that the tranſlator could not give it up for the cool correction of Pauw.

p. 12. l. 13.

This ſoftly-breathing odour marks the approach of ſome divinity. When Juno, in the 14th Iliad, retires to her apartment to dreſs with more than ordinary care,

Here firſt ſhe bathes; and round her body pours
Soft oil of fragrance, and ambroſial ſhow'rs:
The winds perfum'd the balmy gale convey
Thro' heav'n, thro' earth, and all th' aerial way;
Spirit divine! whoſe exhalation greets
The ſenſe of Gods with more than mortal ſweets. POPE.

Thus Venus in the firſt Æneid diſcovers herſelf to Æneas,

Ambroſiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere.

Her waving locks immortal odours ſhed,
And breath'd ambroſial ſcents around her head. PITT.

p. 13. l. 1.

Æſchylus with great judgement introduces theſe daughters of Oceanus as attending Prometheus; by their conſanguinity they muſt be a friendly train. In the ſimplicity of antient manners their father's conſent muſt firſt be obtained; and even thus virgin modeſty is ſomething hurt. The Nymphs of the waters wore no ſandals; hence Thetis is called the ſilver-footed, as Juno is the golden-ſlippered queen.

p. 14. l. 7.

Japetus had three ſons, Mencœtius, Prometheus, and Epimetheus. Mencœtius for his inſolence and audacious attempts was by Jupiter ſmitten with thunder and

and caſt into Tartarus, where the vanquiſhed Titans were impriſoned. Heſiod. To this Prometheus here alludes.

p. 16. l. 13.

Gaia, offended with her huſband Ouranus for having impriſoned the braveſt of her ſons, encouraged Saturn to revenge the affront, and armed him with a ſcythe of adamant, with which he diſmembered his father, then ſeized his throne. But having heard a prophecy that he in his turn ſhould be dethroned by one of his ſons, to evade the completion of it, he ſwallowed down all his male offſpring as ſoon as they were born, till at the birth of Jupiter Rhea deceived him by a ſtrange device, and privately conveyed the child to Crete, where he was educated and concealed till he was of age to appear in arms againſt his father. As Saturn was the youngeſt ſon of Ouranus, the two eldeſt, Titanus and Japetus, claimed their hereditary honours, and oppoſed the ſovereignty of Jupiter. The war had now continued ten years without intermiſſion, and no proſpect of a deciſion appeared, when Jupiter releaſed Briareus, Cottus, and Gyges, the ſons whom Saturn had impriſoned, and by feaſting them with Nectar and Ambroſia ſecured their fidelity: theſe were of immenſe courage, ſtrength, and ſize; each had fifty heads and an hundred hands: by their aſſiſtance the Titans were totally defeated, and Jupiter acknowledged as the ſovereign of the ſky. Heſiod deſcribes this battle with wonderful ſublimity.

p. 17. l. 7.

A multiplicity of names was a mark of dignity; but Themis could not with propriety be called Gaia; this our poet miſtook for Rhea. Gaia is the earth in its primitive uncultivated ſtate, terra inculta; Rhea is the earth in its improved ſtate of cultivation, tellus culta: and as from this culture property aroſe, Juſtice had here her office, to aſſign and protect this property, ſuum cuique: Themis therefore, as the goddeſs of Juſtice, might well have the appellation of Rhea. This is only to ſhow that we underſtand the mythology of the antients much better than they did themſelves.

p. 18. l. 4.

We are not informed for what cauſe Jupiter was ſo offended with the unhappy race of mortals; but by way of puniſhment he withdrew from them παντέχνε πυρὸς σέλας, the fiery flame, that lends its aid to every art: this Prometheus ſtole from heaven, and reconveyed to them in an hollow cane: hinc illæ lacrymæ.

p. 21. l. 9.

Il paroît monté ſur je ne ſçai quel animal aîlé; bizarrerie inexplicable. Brumoy. Of this breed was the winged horſe of Aſtolfo. 4th book, 13th c. Orlando Furioſo.

p. 24. l. 11.

We have before ſeen one brother of Prometheus driven thunder-ſtruck to Tartarus; we have here another of that unhappy family, the famous Atlas, condemned to ſupport in his arms the pillars of the heavens.

p. 24. l. 18.

After the defeat of the Titans Gaia, from an adventure with Tartarus, brought forth this her youngeſt ſon, the moſt enormous and moſt terrible of all the giant race: he had an hundred dragon-heads; his eyes glared fire; from all his heads he uttered every horrid ſound, ſometimes intelligible to the gods, ſometimes the lowing of a bull, ſometimes the roaring of a lion, ſometimes the howl of dogs, ſometimes the hiſs of ſerpents: his force was ſo formidable, as alone to endanger the ſovereignty of the ſky, and to compel Jupiter to exert his whole ſtrength and all his vollied thunder, of which Heſiod has given us a noble deſcription. Happily for poetry this monſter, inſtead of being driven down to Tartarus, was defeated in the plains of Sicily, where the mountain Ætna was hurled upon him. The genius of Heſiod ſeems to have taken fire from hence, and communicated the flame to Æſchylus, Pindar, and Virgil.

p. 28. l. 2.

The Chorus here alludes to the puniſhment of Menœtius and Atlas mentioned before.

p. 28. l. 5.

This ſtanza and the next relate to Prometheus, the laſt to Atlas. All Aſia lamented the ſufferings of the former; the earth, the ſea, and the gloomy depths of Pluto ſympathize with Atlas, for whilſt he bore the heavens on his ſhoulders all below muſt be violently preſſed beneath his feet. Pauw.

p. 30. l. 2.

The tranſlator has followed the emendation of Pauw; for though ἀείσυροι be a proper and general epithet for the provident ants, who are therefore by Ovid ſtiled frugilegæ, and it is to the purpoſe of Horace when he ſays of this little animal, Ore trahit quodcunque poteſt, yet in this place it has no pertinent analogy to untutored barbarians dwelling in caves: it was not then the induſtrious forecaſt of the ant to which Æſchylus had occaſion to allude, but its neſt ſcooped in the ground: ἀείσορος conveys the preciſe idea.

p. 30. l. 8.

Of the many advantages, for which the tranſlator is indebted to Æſchylus, the greateſt and moſt valuable is the honour which he receives from the acquaintance of ſome perſons of the higheſt rank and the moſt diſtinguiſhed eminence in literature; among theſe he is proud to reckon

RICHARD PAUL JODRELL, Esq.

This gentleman has been ſo kind as to communicate his own obſervations on one Tragedy, the Siege of Thebes, with leave to the compiler of theſe notes to ſelect from them ſuch as might be found to coincide with his plan; a liberal uſe has been made of theſe, enough to make the reader regret that the preſſing call for this publication would not admit of a delay, till the ſame learned perſon's

ſon's obſervations on the other tragedies could be reviſed; but ex pede Herculem.

The tranſlator had religiouſly adhered to his original in the δυσκρίτας δύσεις, v. 457. but was totally at a loſs to account for the ſuperior difficulty of marking the *ſetting* of the Stars. He took the liberty to communicate his embaraſſment to Mr. Jodrell, and was immediately favoured with this clear and judicious ſolution of the paſſage.

"It is difficult to aſcertain the degree of knowledge, which the Philoſophers contemporary with Æſchylus had of the fixed Stars; for Hipparchus the Rhodian, who flouriſhed only 120 years before Chriſt, which was near 420 years after the birth of Æſchylus, was the firſt who dared to undertake a thing, which, ſays Pliny, ſeemed to ſurpaſs the power of a Divinity, that of numbering the Stars for Poſterity, and reducing them to a rule. Becauſe the civil year of the antients did not correſpond with the apparent annual motion of the Sun, it was impoſſible by the Calendar to aſcertain the preciſe times for the purpoſes of agriculture, as the ſame day of the month would not happen in the ſame ſeaſon of the year; it was neceſſary therefore to have recourſe to more certain ſtandards and invariable characters to diſtinguiſh times, which the riſings and the ſettings of the Stars naturally afforded: Prometheus therefore with great propriety might boaſt of this ſignal and important diſcovery to mankind: of which Virgil, in his firſt Georgic, when he delivers his poetical precepts for the Huſbandman, makes a particular injunction,

Præterea tam ſunt Arcturi ſidera nobis,
Hædorumque dies ſervandi, et lucidus anguis, &c.

Heſiod had before given precepts of a ſimilar nature.

Now the riſing of a Star, as defined by Chryſippus, is its advancement above the Earth, and its ſetting the occultation of it under the Earth. (See Stanley's Hiſtory of Philoſophy, Part 8. c. 8.) And Aſtronomers have divided the riſings and ſettings of Stars, according to their technical expreſſions, into Coſmical, Achronical, and Heliacal, which are thus explained by Keil in his 19th lecture, p. 222. "A Star is ſaid to riſe or ſet coſmically, which riſes or ſets when the Sun riſes; achronically, when it riſes while the Sun ſets, that is in the evening, when it is in oppoſition to the Sun, and is viſible all night; heliacally, when after it has been in conjunction with the Sun, and on that account inviſible, it comes to be at ſuch a diſtance from him as to be ſeen in the morning before Sun riſing, when the Sun, by his apparent motion, recedes from the Star towards the Eaſt: but the heliacal ſetting is, when the Sun approaches ſo near a Star, that it hides it with its beams, which keep the fainter light of the ſtar from being perceived." This I conceive to be the meaning of the Poet in his epithet of δυσκρίτας, or

an harder ſcience yet,
Their ſetting.

for by this philoſophical ſolution the obſervation of the ſettings of the Stars muſt be attended with more difficulty than that of the riſings: this appears to me to be the moſt natural explication of this paſſage."

p. 34.

p. 34. l. 5.

The Chorus here alludes to the ſolemn annual feſtival, which the Gods held with their father Oceanus, and at which they ſhowed their piety and reverence by their attendance and miniſtry. Pauw. See Homer, 1 Il. v. 423. with Mr. Pope's note.

p. 36. l. 1.

The poet here introduces to us the moſt ſingular and illuſtrious perſonage of antient Greece, from whom the nobleſt families were proud of deriving their pedigree; the bare mention of her was a compliment to their vanity, and therefore always well accepted: it had a peculiar propriety here, as it prepared the Athenian ſpectator to receive her great deſcendant Hercules, who was to appear in the next play, which unhappily is loſt. In the Supplicants we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more particularly of her.

p. 36. l. 13.

So Ovid ſeems to have underſtood this paſſage,

junctiſque canendo
Vincere arundinibus ſervantia lumina tentat.'

And ſtill betwixt, his tuneful pipe he plies,
And watch'd his hour to cloſe the keeper's eyes. DRYDEN.

In her diſtraction ſhe thought ſhe ſaw the ſpectre of her keeper Argos, ſhe thought ſhe heard the ſound of the Pipe with which Mercury lulled all his hundred Eyes to ſleep.

p. 38. l. 3.

Prometheus had mentioned her father's name, and the cauſe of her ſufferings; from whence Iö, rightly conceiving him to be a prophet, had requeſted him to tell her *clearly* what woes yet awaited her, and how they might be remedied: he anſwers, I will tell thee *clearly*, without that ænigmatical obſcurity which had rendered oracles famous for

Dark-utter'd anſwers of ambiguous ſenſe.

p. 40. l. 3.

Inachus, the father of Iö, was the ſon of Oceanus and Tethys.

p. 40. l. 13.

Iö tells her tale with great propriety, and by preſerving the decorum of her own character conſults the dignity of her illuſtrious deſcendants. The circumſtance of the viſion, and the influence of the god over her ſlumbers, is a fine ſtroke of nature embelliſhed with a rich poetical imagination;

Theſe are the day dreams of a maid in love.

Ovid, who had no prejudice of high-deſcended anceſtry to flatter, has taken the liberty to depart from this bienſeance; Pellicis argolicæ is a coarſe appellation, and his poem is ſo much the worſe for it.

p. 42. l. 2.

The tranſlator hath here adopted the very judicious reading of Pauw with regard to Cenchrea; but, notwithſtanding his aliud melius et facilius tibi dabo, prefers the Λερνης τε κρηνην of Canterus to his Λερνης or Λερνην αδρην τε.

p. 44. l. 3.

The horrid cuſtom of ſacrificing ſtrangers, whoſe ill fortune drove them on their coaſts, marks the ſavage and inhoſpitable manners of theſe barbarians.

p. 45. l. 3.

Boſphorus, the paſſage of the heifer.

p. 45. l. 6.

The Chorus had declared themſelves to be deeply affected at the narrative of Iö; Prometheus therefore, having enumerated more and greater woes which yet awaited her, addreſſes them thus, Think you that this tyrant of the ſkies is of a fierce and headlong violence, when he has thus driven a mortal, even whilſt he is a ſuitor for her love, to theſe wandrings? Then turning to the unhappy ſufferer he ſays,

A rugged woer, virgin, have thy charms
Won thee.

There is in this a malignant triumph well ſuited to the implacable reſentment of the ſpeaker, which would not allow him to acknowledge that Jupiter did not voluntarily inflict theſe miſeries on his favourite fair, but that with great reluctance he was obliged to make this ſacrifice to the jealous and enraged Juno.

p. 46. l. 8.

This is one of thoſe fine touches which diſtinguiſh a maſter's hand. Iö had been cruelly treated, and was ſinking even to deſperation under the ſenſe of the miſeries which ſhe was yet to ſuffer, when ſhe was told that her rugged woer, from whom all her afflictions aroſe, ſhould one day be deprived of the ſovereignty of heaven. Here, inſtead of that pleaſure with which it was ſuppoſed the predicted event would fill her indignant mind, her concealed love juſt riſes to ſoften her reſentment, and then, fearful of a diſcovery, hides itſelf beneath her conſcious dignity, and the modeſt reſerve of her ſex: nay, the very queſtions, which ſhe afterwards aſks apparently to ſhow her joy for the ruin of Jupiter, diſcover the moſt delicate tincture of tender and refined ſenſibility.

p. 47. l. ult.

From Iö deſcended Epaphus, Libye, Belus, Danaus, Hypermneſtra, Abas, Proetos, Acriſius, Danae, Perſeus, Electrion, Alcmena, Hercules.

p. 49. l. 8.

There is ſomething ſo very ingenious in Mr. Bryant's analyſis of theſe daughters of Phorcys, that the moſt rigid exactors of hiſtorical proof will not

be offended to ſee it here laid before the reader. This hiſtory, he ſays, relates to an Amonian temple founded in the extreme parts of Africa, in which there were three prieſteſſes of Canaanitiſh race, who on that account are ſaid to be in the ſhape of Swans, that bird being the inſigne of their nation. The notion of their having but one eye among them took its riſe from an hieroglyphic very common in Egypt, and probably in Canaan: this was the repreſentation of an eye, which was ſaid to be engraved upon the pediment of their temples. This may have been one reaſon, among others, why the Cyclopians and Arimaſpians are repreſented with one eye,

The Arimaſpian troops, whoſe frowning foreheads
Glare with one blazing eye.

Bryant's Analyſis, Vol. I. p. 380. For his account of Meduſa, ſee p. 510. &c.

p. 49. l. ult.

Pluto is here the name of a river ἀπὸ τῦ πλούτυ, from the gold found there; with which theſe northern parts are by hiſtorians ſaid to abound, but to be inacceſſible on accout of the Gryphins, the fierceſt and moſt formidable of all birds, againſt which the Arimaſpians are continually in arms. Stanley.

p. 50. l. 2.

The antients placed the Æthiopians at the extremities of the earth, not only towards the ſouth, but to the eaſt alſo and to the weſt; hence they are ſaid to dwell near the fountains of the ſun, ſo Virgil,

Oceani finem juxta ſolemque cadentem
Ultimus Æthiopum locus eſt.

The river Æthiops, Niger, or Nigris rolls his black ſtream through immenſe deſerts ſcorched with intolerable heat, till it comes to its laſt cataract; thence it falls into Ægypt, and aſſumes the name of the Nile. Stanley. "Four miles below Cairo it divideth; making of the richeſt portion of the land a triangular iſland, named Delta, in that it beareth the form of the Greek Δ." Sandys.

p. 54. l. 1.

This ſage was Pittacus, of Mitylene, one of the ſeven celebrated wiſe men of Greece.

p. 58. l. 13.

Ouranus dethroned by his ſon Saturn, and Saturn by his ſon Jupiter.

p. 61. l. 8.

It is not neceſſary to ſend the Ladies to Pindar for their information in this celeſtial anecdote, as our courtly Lanſdowne in his Maſk of Peleus and Thetis is ready to diſcover the ſecret. Jupiter beheld the charms of Thetis, daughter of Oceanus, with the eye of a lover, and intended to advance her, as his conſort, to the imperial throne of heaven. Now it was in the fates that this lady ſhould have a ſon who was to be greater than his father. Prometheus alone, by his divine

divine foreſight, could open the danger to Jupiter; but this he firmly refuſed to do, till he ſhould be releaſed from the rock. After Hercules, by the permiſſion of Jupiter, had killed the tormenting eagle, and unbound his chains, he diſcloſed the decree of the fates: Thetis was given in marriage to Peleus, and the prophecy was accompliſhed in the famous Achilles.

p. 63. l. 5.

The Scholiaſt explains this paſſage by ſaying that whoever ſhould attempt to ſuccour Prometheus, and deliver him from his pain, ſhould himſelf be ſent to the ſhades of Orcus, and the dark abyſs of Tartarus. The words are very remarkable; for want of a better explication of them, we muſt take up with this.

p. 64. l. 19.

The Chorus throughout this tragedy find themſelves in a very delicate and difficult ſituation. Conſanguinity and affection brought them to the rock to commiſerate the afflictions of Prometheus; hence they became intereſted in the action: as his ſufferings were unjuſt, their office, which led them to favour the good, led them alſo to expreſs their diſapprobation of his puniſhment; but as it was inflicted by Jupiter, their piety and reverence would not permit them to oppoſe the king of the gods; all that remained for them was to condole with him, to give him friendly counſel, and to ſoften his inflamed reſentment. Their character is preſerved with wonderful propriety and decorum. Even at the laſt, when nothing could prevail with him to abate his implacable ſpirit, and Mercury with much tenderneſs adviſed them to retire and avoid the impending ſtorm, they anſwer with a becoming firmneſs that they could not be guilty of ſuch a deed of baſeneſs: antient manners, which conſidered the deſertion of a friend as the vileſt of actions, required this ſacrifice of their own ſafety.

# NOTES
## ON THE
# SUPPLICANTS.

PAGE 71. The Chorus.

DANAUS, the fourth in deſcent from Iö, had fifty daughters; his brother Ægyptus had fifty ſons. It was much for the intereſt of Ægyptus to unite the families and the kingdoms by marrying his ſons to the daughters of his brother; but the propoſal, which was urged with violence and rudeneſs, was ſo diſagreeable to Danaus and his female train, that they ſailed from the mouth of the Nile and ſought refuge on the coaſt of Greece, where we find them juſt arrived.

p. 71. l. 6.

The laws of antient Greece were ſevere, not ſanguinary till Draco; they permitted even the murderer to atone for his crime by baniſhment, which often was voluntary, ſometimes the puniſhment inflicted by the ſtate; there are many inſtances in Homer; in Statius, Tydeus, ſtained with a brother's blood, fled a voluntary exile to the court of Adraſtus: hence the Furies, declaring their office to Minerva, tell her

'Tis our's to drive the murderer from the houſe.

Tyndarus, in the Electra of Euripides, urges this ſtrongly againſt Oreſtes,

Deaf to the call of juſtice he infring'd
The firm authority of the public laws;
For when beneath my daughter's murd'ring axe
The royal Agamemnon bow'd his head,
He ought to have call'd the laws, the righteous laws,
T' avenge the blood, and by appeal to them
Have driven his mother from this princely manſion:
Thus 'midſt his ills calm reaſon had borne rule,
Juſtice had held its courſe, and he been righteous.

p. 72.

p. 72. l. 6.

We have here indubitable marks of a colony moving from Ægypt to ſettle in Greece; and as theſe emigrants came forward under the auſpices of their tutelary Iſis, we might well expect to find the ſymbol of that goddeſs. The national vanity of the Grecians was hurt to ſee theſe ſtrangers give birth to an illuſtrious line of kings and heroes, whoſe glory eclipſed that of their own Autochthones: but their lively imagination ſoon found a remedy for this; it created a daughter from their Inachus, dreſſed her out with every charm that might engage the love of Jupiter, tranſmuted the ſymbolical into a real heifer, and ſent her into Ægypt, there to bring forth the famous Epaphus. Now theſe Emigrants might be received with a good grace, as being originally of Argive extraction; and Greece, in return for a colony, gratuitouſly preſented Ægypt with a Goddeſs.

p. 72. l. 12.

It was uſual for ſupplicants to ſtretch forth in their hands branches of olive bound with wreaths of wool; ſee the Furies, p. 393. v. ult. Euripides expreſſes this by ἱκτῆρι θαλλῷ. So Virgil,

Et vittâ comptos voluit prætendere ramos. 8 Æn. v. 128.

The olive was an emblem of peace; and Servius tells us that its branches were bound with wool, the lamb being the gentleſt of animals, to ſhow the weak and defenceleſs ſtate of the preſenter.

p. 73. l. 8.

There does not appear to be any thing in nature, or in the cuſtoms of antiquity, to hinder marriages within this line of conſanguinity. When Pelaſgus aſks theſe ſupplicants whether their laws forbid ſuch alliances, they anſwer evaſively; this allegation muſt therefore be conſidered only as an oratorical exaggeration.

p. 75. l. 15.

There is a difficulty in the original, owing probably to a corrupted text, which no annotator has yet cleared; the general idea is very obvious; ſupplicants fly for protection to the altars of the gods, which afford refuge even in the violence of war. Plutarch expreſſes the ſame ſentiment, ἔστι δύλῳ φεύξιμος βωμὸς· κὰν πολεμίους φεύγοντες, ἂν ἀγάλματος λάβωνται ἢ ναοῦ, θαρροῦσιν. De Superſtitione. —— It is well known how impious it was held by the Grecians to offer violence to thoſe who had ſate as ſupplicants at their altars.

p. 76. l. 12.

This ſenſe ariſes from the plain and literal conſtruction of the text; ſententia eſt optima, and every attempt to alter it has only tortured it into obſcurity.

This alludes to the ſolemn lamentations, the θρηνῳδίαι, chanted by their friends at the funerals of the deceaſed. Milton, that exact obſerver of antient manners, makes his Chorus break out into one of theſe mournful ſongs on the news of Samſon's death, till Manoa checks them, thinking it more prudent to bury his ſon with ſilent obſequies.

p. 77.

p. 77. l. 17.

The Scholiaſt, following the uſual interpretation of the word, explains ξὺν λαχίδι by rending their robes, and, amidſt the ſilence of the other annotators, he has the ſanction of the learned Mr. Heath. This was a deed expreſſive of the laſt deſpair; we have an inſtance of this in the ſiege of Thebes; and in the Perſians when Xerxes rends his robes, we hear of it enough; it compleats the diſtreſs of his mother, and even of his father's ſhade; but in all theſe places the word uſed is either ἐρείκω, or ῥήγνυμι: an author is the beſt commentator on himſelf; wherever λαχὶς is uſed by Æſchylus, it ſignifies what the Latin language expreſſes by lacinia, and the Engliſh by lace or fringe: Perſæ, l. 837. where this idea of rending the ornaments of dreſs is intended to be conveyed, σπαραγῶσι is added to λαχίδες. The Chorus here are not in a deſperate ſituation; they had eſcaped from their perſecutors, were ſafely landed in Greece, and had hopes of protection from the gods, to whoſe altars they were fled, and from the generous inhabitants of the Apian land, to which they addreſs themſelves for favour, though their voice and dreſs be barbaric, that is, ſhows them to be of a foreign country. Pelaſgus ſpeaks of them as

Gorgeouſly veſted in barbaric ſtoles,
That float in many a fold;

where the word χλίουτα will not admit the idea of this ſuppoſed dilaceration.

p. 81. l. 13.

Theſe Gods were Jupiter, as preſiding over the Olympic games, Neptune, as over the Iſthmian, Apollo, as inſtitutor of the Pythian,

Inſtituit ſacros celebri, certamine ludos,
Pythia de domiti ſerpentis nomine dictos. Ov. Met.

and Mercury, who taught the graceful exerciſes of the palæſtra,

Qui feros cultus hominum recentum
Voce formaſti catus, et decoræ
More paleſtræ.

p. 83. l. 1.

The image of Neptune is characteriſed by his Trident, which plainly declares the God: but this adjunct of Apollo is not ſo clear; Pauſanias tells us that the Grecians worſhipped the Cock as ſacred to Apollo, becauſe he announces the riſing of the Sun. But further than this, they drew their auguries of ſucceſs from this bird: thus the Bœotians formed a joyful preſage of their glorious victory over the Lacedæmonians at Leuctra, from the crowing of the cocks during all the preceding night; for the cock, when he has conquered his rival, proclaims his victory with loud and chearful crowings; but if conquered, he hides himſelf in ſilence. Verderii imagines deorum. See alſo Cicero de Divinatione, 1 L. xxxv.

p. 83.

p. 83. l. 4.

This is well put. Apollo was fabled to have been baniſhed from heaven, becauſe he killed the thunder-forging Cyclopes.

p. 83. l. 11.

Danaus does well to explain this image to his daughters; for in the Ægyptian rites Mercury was depicted with his caduceus and talaria indeed, but with the head of a dog, as the latrator Anubis.

p. 84. l. 10.

Not only the heavens, but the ſea, and even the infernal regions had each their Jupiter; wherefore this god had an image among the Argives with three eyes, to denote his power over thoſe three regions, which the antient mythology has divided between the three ſons of Saturn. Verderius from Pauſanias.

p. 86. l. 8.

We have in this hiſtory clear traces of another colony from Ægypt, whoſe Chieftain Apis drove out the barbarous remains of the Ophite race.

p. 87. l. 3.

The ladies of antient Greece, like the fair females that grace our happy country, were remarkable for that ſoft and delicate compoſition of colour, which conſiſts of a fine red beautifully intermixed and incorporated with white: when Pelaſgus therefore obſerved the glowing tints of theſe dames, he pronounces them not of Argive race, but readily derives them from ſome warmer clime. Mr. Addiſon, in his Cato, has expreſſed the ſame idea in theſe charming lines,

> The glowing dames of Zama's royal court
> Have faces flush'd with more exalted charms:
> The Sun, that rolls his chariot o'er their heads,
> Works up more fire and colour in their cheeks.

p. 90. l. 8.

The addreſs of theſe virgins here deſerves our attention: their father, knowing the quick and volatile temper of the Grecians, had warned them not to let their anſwers weary the ear; Pelaſgus had given them the ſame admonition; hence the Chorus ſays, "brief will I be, and plain:" and thus far indeed all her replies have a modeſt brevity and preciſion; here a trying queſtion had been put to her, which could not be evaded; but as her ſucceſs depended on the reception her anſwer ſhould meet with, ſhe awakes the attention of the king by a fine moral ſentiment, and having thus prepared his mind gives him a direct anſwer, by applying the force of it to her own caſe. There is exquiſite art in this.

p. 94. l. 11.

There is great propriety in this plea, to which Pelaſgus was naturally led by Grecian ideas ariſing from the laws of that country, where orphan virgins were to marry their neareſt of kin, and ſuch were ordered to take them to wife:

Lex eſt, ut orbæ, qui ſint genere proximi,
Eis nubant: et illos ducere eadem hæc lex jubet. Ter. Phorm.

p. 95. l. 4.

The Athenians, and indeed all the ſtates of Greece, were animated with the nobleſt and moſt generous ſpirit of liberty, and the ſtrongeſt abhorrence of a tyrant; for by that name they denoted the man who had uſurped the ſupreme power, and turned the free democracy into a monarchy,

Non quia crudelis ille, ſed quoniam grave
Omne inſuëtis onus.

Nay, proud as they were of their own antient kings, they could not bear to allow them a power inconſiſtent with their free laws, the right which every citizen claimed of giving his voice in the public council, and adding his ſanction to the meaſures which the king was to carry into execution only in obedience to the will of the people. We have many inſtances of this generous enthuſiaſm.

p. 96. l. 16.

This paſſage confirms the obſervations on the word λαχὶς in the former ode: Mr. Heath here tranſlates πολυμίτων πέπλων by peplorum multis liciis textorum: and indeed theſe ladies ſeem to have been very elegantly dreſſed, and to be conſcious enough of it.

p. 101. l. ult.

The ſacred groves were incloſed; the Chorus therefore properly aſks what protection an unconſecrated grove could afford: the anſwer ſhows that the ſtate would defend them, and they needed not that hallowed aſylum; yet as the danger came upon them before they could be removed by a decree of the ſtate, they fled for refuge to the ſacred grove.

p. 102. l. 4.

It is well known that the antients were very ſuperſtitious with regard to well or ill omened words. Tully gives us ſome curious recitals in his Book on Divination. Nothing can be more inauſpicious than a winged dragon; the mention of it was therefore of ill omen: the Chorus excuſe themſelves as being depreſſed with *fear*; this was another ill-omened word, eſpecially when addreſſed to a king; they recover themſelves with this auſpicious wiſh, Be all thy words, be all thy actions happy; which ſhows that εὐφραίνε cannot be taken actively for animum mihi exhilera.

p. 104. l. 8.

Alluding to the paſſage of the Boſphorus, which divides Europe from Aſia.

p. 104. l. 19.

The moſt antient opinion was that the Nile proceeded from the ſnow diſſolving in the mountains of the upper Æthiopia; this is mentioned by Anaxagoras, Æſchylus, and Euripides. "Than the waters whereof there is none more ſweet; being not unpleaſantly cold, and of all others the moſt wholeſome. Confirmed by that anſwer of Peſcennius Niger to his murmuring ſoldiers, What? crave you wine, when you have the Nilus to drink of? Such is it in being ſo concocted by the ſun, at all times in ſome part directly over it; and by length of courſe, running from ſouth to north (beſides in ambages) above one and forty degrees, &c." Sandys.

p. 105. l. 6.

The poet here, by taking Iŏ under her change from the heifer to her own natural form, has given us the preciſe image of the Ægyptian Iſis, who was repreſented as a moſt elegant woman with lunar horns on her head. See Verder. Mr. Bryant, and particularly Hiſtoire du ciel.

p. 105. l. 10.

Jupiter reſtored Iŏ to her former ſhape, and with his gentle hand ſoothed her to peace: hence their illuſtrious ſon had the name of Epaphus, ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐπαφῆς.

p. 109. l. 15.

We are indebted to the acumen of Pauw for bringing this ſublime idea to light.

p. 110. l. 15.

Hoar law, an elegant expreſſion to which the cana fides of the Latins correſponds. Jupiter is now addreſſed as the juſt and righteous king, and therefore governing by the antient laws of heaven.

p. 112. l. 10.

It had been obſerved before that the Ægyptian rowers were a ſable train.

p. 113. l. ult.

The gymnaſtic exerciſes of the Grecians, to which they were all trained, formed their bodies to this firmneſs; it is intended here as a ſarcaſm on the Ægyptians, who are ſuppoſed to melt beneath the noon-tide heat.

p. 114. l. 12.

As the Chorus had compared the ſons of Ægyptus to ravening Dogs, Danaus expreſſes the Grecians by Wolves, as ſtronger and fiercer animals; perhaps it would be too great a refinement, with Stanley, to derive the former alluſion from their Anubis, and the latter from the Apollo Λύκειος. The compariſon is continued in the next line, where the papyrus, whoſe root was a common food in Ægypt, is deſpiſed as inferior to the corn of Greece.

p. 119. l. 5.

The timid modeſty of theſe virgins, and the ſober piety of Danaus are finely contraſted with the brutal inſolence and ſacrilegious violence of the Ægyptian herald: this carries the diſtreſs to its greateſt height, raiſes our pity and terror, and adds a peculiar luſtre to the calm dignity of Pelaſgus in the next Scene.

p. 119. l. 11.

Pauwii conjecturâ Νυμφοδετῳ δορι, haſta quæ ſponſo geritur, et cui annexa eſt ſponſi cauſa, conjecturas omnes quaſcunque hactenus vidi mirâ ſuâ ſuavitate longe longeque ſuperat. But the tranſlator is not to be bantered out of this reading by the Attic wit, nor to be beat out of it by the Νυμφοδετῳ δορι, the σκηπτρῳ ἥλοισι πεπαρμενῳ Heathii. This whole ſcene is ſo difficult, and ſo miſerably mutilated, that the reader of Æſchylus is under the greateſt obligations to Pauw for his free and manly conjectures. If he has not always hit on the true reading, he has at leaſt given a probable and ingenious one, and added ſenſe and ſpirit to that rude and undigeſted maſs, from which none before had been extunded.

Pelaſgus had before gently rebuked the herald for the impropriety of his conduct; he had landed on a foreign ſhore, and advanced without aſking the protection of any of the natives, and without reverencing the ſanctity of the place: he rudely anſwers, I found here what I had loſt, and I will ſeize it: being commanded not to touch the Virgins, he has recourſe to his ſacred office, and promiſes to explain himſelf clearly, but inſtead of this abruptly declares that Mars decides not by evidence, and at once threatens war: this is a ſtrong mark of the impetuous and lawleſs violence of the ſons of Ægyptus. Perhaps the critical taſte of Pauw may be acknowledged in this remark.

p. 125. l. 16.

That benevolent conqueror Oſiris, whoſe military expeditions were undertaken with a view of inſtructing mankind in planting, ſowing, and the uſeful arts of civilized life, with great care introduced the vine, wherever the ſoil was adapted to its growth; where it was not, as particularly in Egypt, he taught the inhabitants the uſe of ferment, and ſhowed them the way to make a wine of barley little inferior to the juice of the grape. See Bryant's Analyſis, V. II. p. 59. This liquor Pelaſgus holds in contempt, compared with the rich and generous wines of Greece.

p. 128. l. 7.

The force of love through all the animal creation is here finely deſcribed: Lucretius ſeems to have it in his eye in that exquiſitely beautiful addreſs to Venus with which he opens his poem: but the chaſte regard to decorum, which breathes through the admonition of Danaus, deſerves to be written in letters of gold.

p. 129. l. 14.

As Ægypt was indebted for its fruitfulneſs to the overflowing of the Nile, the firſt riſing of its waters was marked with religious care, and welcomed with ſolemn hymns.

p. 131. l. 5.

This is an alluſion, dark as it ought to be, to the future fortune of theſe perſecuted ladies: their ſtory is well known. The epiſtle of Hypermneſtra to Lynceus by Ovid is a fine ſupplement to this tragedy.

# NOTES

## ON THE

# SIEGE OF THEBES.

### PAGE 141. l. 1.

THERE are ſo many alluſions in this tragedy to the hiſtory of Cadmus, that it may not be improper to lay it before the reader in one view. When Jupiter in the form of a Bull had carried off Europa, the daughter of Agenor king of Phœnicia, the diſconſolate father ſent his ſon Cadmus in ſearch of her, commanding him not to return unleſs he found her. Cadmus, having wandered over the world in vain, conſulted the Oracle of Apollo at Delphos; the anſwer of the God was,

> Behold amidſt the fields a lonely Cow,
> Unworn with yokes, unbroken to the plough;
> Mark well the place where firſt ſhe lays her down,
> There meaſure out thy walls, and build thy town. ADDISON.

He obeyed. Some of his attendants were ſent to a river nigh the place, to bring living water for a ſacrifice which he was preparing to Jupiter; an immenſe dragon ruſhed from his cave and killed them: Cadmus, to revenge the death of his friends, fought with this dragon and ſlew him; then by the admonition of Minerva he ſowed the teeth of the dragon in the ground, from which an hoſt of men completely armed ſuddenly aroſe; theſe furiouſly attacked each other, till only five of the number remained alive: peace was made between them, and Cadmus aſſociated them to his train. The Thebans afterwards were proud of deriving ſome of their beſt families from this dragon race. Cadmus now built Thebes, and having eſtabliſhed his colony married Harmonia, the daughter of Mars and Venus; all the gods attended at the nuptials, and each honoured the bride with ſome preſent.

p. 141. l. 2.

The man that guides the helm of ſtate, ἐν πρύμνῃ πόλεως οἴακα νωμῶν. This beautiful Metaphor, I believe, will be found one of thoſe ſelect few, which are univerſal in all the poliſhed languages of civilized nations; our author uſes it again v. 62. and v. 658. of this play; and his contemporary Pindar in his firſt Pythian Ode, v. 159. and indeed almoſt every author in proſe or poetry ſince that period: Horace even addreſſes the republick itſelf under the character of a Ship; and Cicero in his oration pro domo ſuâ, ſays in illis tenebris reipublicæ cæciſque nubibus et procellis, quum ſenatum a gubernaculis dejeciſſes, populum e navi exturbaſſes, ipſe archipirata cum grege prædonum impuriſſimo pleniſſimis velis navigares. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 141. l. 5.

The piety of the antients in aſcribing their ſucceſs to the Gods was conſpicuous and uniform: hence the χαριστήρια of the Greeks and the *grates* of the Latins were preſents to their Gods to teſtify their gratitude for the divine aſſiſtance. Stanley.

p. 143. l. 1.

Apollodorus tells us that Minerva had given Tireſias, as a compenſation for his loſs of ſight, which ſhe could not reſtore, the faculty of underſtanding the voices of all birds: hence his prophecies were taken from auguries only, ſo that the inſpection of the entrails placed on the altar, the mounting of the ſmoke and the flame, and all the omens to which fire was neceſſary, were out of his department.

p. 143. l. 18.

Longinus has ſelected this paſſage as an inſtance of the bold and heroic genius of Æſchylus. The ſublimity here ariſes from the aſſemblage of the images: the Bull ſlain on the black-orbed ſhield ſhows it to be a ſacrifice to Pluto and a ſolemn devotion of themſelves; the dipping of their hands in the blood, the invocation of Mars, Bellona, and Terror, their ſhedding tears but without any ſign of remorſe, and their ſouls of iron glowing with valour, with the ſimile of the lion glaring determined battle, are greatly conceived, and together breathe a ſolemn and terrible magnificence.

Mr. Jodrell obſerves that the beauty of this paſſage has not ſecured it from the ſatirical laſh of Ariſtophanes, whoſe Lyſiſtrata, tendering the oath to her female confederates, propoſes to imitate Æſchylus by ſlaying a ſheep over a ſhield, v. 189.

p. 144. l. 3.

Terror had before been perſonified by Homer as the ſon of Mars,

Οἷος δὲ βροτολοιγὸς Ἄρης πόλεμόν δε μέτεισι,
Τῷ δὲ Φόβος φίλος υἱὸς ἅμα κρατερὸς καὶ ἀταρβὴς
Ἔσπετο, ὅς τ' ἐφόβησε καὶ ἀφρονα περ πολεμιστήν. Il. 13. v. 198.

Terror,

Terror, his beſt lov'd ſon attends his courſe,
Arm'd with ſtern boldneſs, and enormous force;
The pride of haughty warriors to confound,
And lay the ſtrength of tyrants on the ground. POPE.

Virgil has imitated this paſſage, as far as the imperfection of the Latin language would permit,

circumque atræ formidinis ora,
Iræque, inſidiæque, dei comitatus aguntur. Æn. 12. v. 336.

Wrath, terror, treaſon, tumult, and deſpair,
Dire faces and deform'd, ſurround the car,
Friends of the god, and followers of the war. DRYDEN.

I mean, that the beauty of the proſopopæia, or perſonification, is here conſiderably diminiſhed by Formido, Iræ, and Inſidiæ being of the feminine gender, inſtead of maſculine, as Φόβος, or as Terror may be made in Engliſh. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 144. l. 6.

It was the cuſtom of the antients before a battle, in which they apprehended danger, to ſend home to their friends ſome pledges as remembrances, things of little value in themſelves, but rendered dear by the circumſtance: theſe are placed in the chariot of Adraſtus, becauſe Amphiaraus had declared that he alone of the confederate chiefs ſhould return to Argos.

p. 144. l. ult.

Æſchylus is diſtinguiſhed for bold and glowing metaphors: Nothing can be more pictureſque, animated, or more philoſophically exact than the preſent expreſſion, which calls an army approaching, a land-wave advancing with a roaring noiſe: the ſame metaphor occurs afterwards, v. 116. of this play. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 146. l. 13.

Stanley rightly obſerves that the common ſoldiers bore white or plain ſhields, but the Generals had devices on theirs. Therefore Euripides (Phœniſſ. v. 1116.) calls the Argive army λευκάσπιν: and Virgil ſpeaking of Helenor, who was born of a ſlave and conſequently ignoble, ſays parmâ inglorius albâ. Æn. 9.

Slight were his arms, a ſword and ſilver ſhield,
No marks of honour charg'd its empty field. DRYDEN.

R. P. Jodrell.

p. 147. l. 1.

In great diſtreſſes it was cuſtomary for the nobleſt dames to go in proceſſion to the temples, carrying in their hands rich robes and crowns, with which they adorned the images of the tutelary Gods, whoſe protection they implored: thus Virgil deſcribes the Trojan dames,

Interea

Interea ad templum non æquæ Palladis ibant
Crinibus Iliades paſſis, peplumque ferebant
Suppliciter triſtes. Æn. 1. v. 483.

Mean time the Trojan dames, oppreſs'd with woe,
To Pallas' fane in long proceſſion go:
They weep, they beat their breaſts, they rend their hair,
And rich embroider'd veſts for preſents bear. DRYDEN.

This is taken from the ſixth Iliad, where the augur Helenus aſſigns this office to his mother Hecuba.

p. 147. l. 6.

Ἔπιθ', ἴπιθε. The frequent repetitions of the ſame word in this Chorus are extremely natural, and the language of fear in women trembling at the approach of the enemy. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 147. l. 11.

The Gods here addreſſed, θεοὶ πολισσοῦχοι χθονὸς, were thoſe before whoſe images the Chorus now ſtood. Mars and Venus are invoked with peculiar propriety, as the parents of Harmonia, and ſo the great progenitors of the Cadmeian line.

p. 148. l. 8.

Neptune acquired the title of ἵππιος from being the creator of the Horſe, according to the fabulous mythology, and is thus invoked by Virgil in the opening of his Georgicks,

Tuque O cui prima frementem
Fudit equum magno tellus percuſſa tridente
Neptune.

And thou, whoſe trident ſtruck the teeming earth,
And made a paſſage for a courſer's birth. DRYDEN.

The ſtory was that he and Minerva both claimed the honour of giving their name to Athens: Jupiter decreed that whoever produced the moſt uſeful preſent to mankind ſhould have the preference. Neptune ſtruck the earth with his trident, and gave exiſtence to this animal; Minerva with her ſpear raiſed the olive tree, and conquered. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 149. l. 6.

The fire of expreſſion in Æſchylus is often incapable of a literal tranſlation. Here the whole atmoſphere convulſed with the agitation of ſpears is ſaid to be inflamed to madneſs. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 150. l. 11.

Eteocles, with reaſon offended at the intimidating cries of theſe females, treats them with great harſhneſs: his reflections are ſo uncourtly, that they might well ſay

ſay afterwards "thou ſcorneſt our ſex:" but certainly they were out of their province; even the fond and gentle Hector ſays to the amiable Andromache,

No more: — but haſten to thy taſks at home,
There guide the ſpindle, and direct the loom:
Me glory ſummons to the martial ſcene,
The field of combat is the ſphere for men. Il. 6. POPE.

p. 151. l. ult.

Stanley has with much learning and Judgement proved againſt Heinſius, Scaliger, Grotius, and Bochart, that the images of the tutelary Gods were antiently affixed to the prows of ſhips. The alluſion is finely conceived, and expreſſed with great ſtrength and proper conciſeneſs.

p. 152.

Read ——————— The Gods, they ſay, prepare
To quit their ſeats, and leave a vanquiſh'd town.

The Scholiaſt tells us that the Trojans, when their city was ſtormed, ſaw the Gods carrying away their images; this he takes from a tragedy of Sophocles on that ſubject, which is loſt. There is a ſimilar inſtance in the Troades of Euripides; hence Virgil,

Exceſſere omnes adytis ariſque relictis
Dii, quibus imperium hoc ſteterat. Æn. 2.

You ſee our hopeleſs ſtate; how every god,
Who guarded Troy, has left his old abode. PITT.

The Romans were ſo ſtrongly impreſſed with this idea, that when they beſieged a town they anxiouſly inquired the name of the tutelary god, whom they evoked with much ſolemnity. The Reaſon aſſigned for this deſertion was, that amidſt ſuch ſcenes of devaſtation and carnage the reverence and honours due to the gods muſt be neglected; this ſhows the propriety of Eteocles' addreſs before,

Protect her, ſave her; as you ſhare her honours
I plead: a flouriſhing ſtate reveres the Gods.

The learned Mr. Jodrell obſerves here that Jeruſalem, when ſacked, was ſaid to have been forſaken of its Gods; and that the Shekinah, or divine preſence, was undoubtedly withdrawn from the ark of the firſt temple, before it was deſtroyed by the King of Babylon. He adds that Tarquin, before he dedicated the temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, performed the ceremony of unhallowing the ground from all other religious inſtitutions, ut area eſſet tota Jovis. Liv. L. 1. c. 55. He further ſays that this idea and veneration of local divinity was by ſome people carried to ſuch an exceſs of extravagant folly, that they uſed to bind their favourite gods in their temples to prevent ſuch deſertion; which cuſtom ſome Chriſtian Writers, whoſe God is not to be confined with mortal fetters, object with great Indignation againſt the Gentiles. He refers us to Arnob. cont. Gent.

Gent. L. 6. — to Cyprian. ad Demetr. p. 191. Ed. Fell. — Petr. C. 89. p. 435. Ed. Burm. and to Diodor. Sic. L. 17. Q. Curt. L. 4. c. 3.

p. 152. l. 10.

Thus Sophocles,

Γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἡ σιγὴ φέρει. Ajax. v. 293.

This line is quoted to introduce an anecdote which deſerves to be mentioned. When a learned German paid a viſit to the accompliſhed and modeſt M. Dacier, he requeſted her to inſcribe her name and a ſentence in his travelling book, or album, according to the arrogant cuſtom of his country, among the names of the moſt eminent ſcholars in Europe: ſhe at firſt refuſed, but was at laſt prevailed upon, and wrote this celebrated verſe of Sophocles, which Dr. Franklin well tranſlates thus,

Woman, thy ſex's nobleſt ornament
Is ſilence. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 156. l. 17.

It was a cuſtom derived from early antiquity to erect trophies to the gods, of the arms of the conquered, in the place where the victory was obtained; hence their Ζεὺς τρόπαιος & τροπαιοῦχος. The veſts ſtript from the ſlain were hung up in the temples. This diſtinction could not eſcape the ſagacity of Pauw.

p. 160. l. 9.

The tranſlator makes no apology for adopting the interpretation of Pauw. Periti ſciunt.

p. 160. l. 16.

This is a moſt beautiful and pictureſque image: among the horrors of a captive city, which are here ſo finely painted, it was extremely natural for women to deſcribe infants at the breaſt ſhrieking with affright; hence Virgil ſeems to have borrowed a very pathetic idea,

Et trepidæ matres preſſere ad pectora natos. Æn. 7. v. 518.

Pale at the piercing call, the mothers preſt
With ſhrieks their ſtarting infants to the breaſt. PITT.

See alſo Apollonius Rhodius, L. 4. v. 136. —— R. P. Jodrell.

p. 161. l. 5.

This paſſage in the original has an obſcurity on which the annotators have not vouchſafed to caſt one gleam of light. Mr. Heath's interpretation of καρπὸς is beneath the dignity of the occaſion. The tranſlator can hardly flatter himſelf that he has hit on the preciſe idea of his author, but he has not wilfully deviated from the original.

p. 161. l. 16.

We are indebted to Pauw for this elucidation.

p. 162. l. 12.

The whole deſcription of Tydeus is in the boldeſt ſtile and ſtrongeſt colouring of Æſchylus. The ſerpent lying in a torpid ſtate during the winter, is ſuppoſed to have his rage increaſed by heat; hence this glowing deſcription of him by Virgil,

Poſtquam exhauſta palus, terræque ardore dehiſcunt,
Exilit in ſiccum, et flammantia lumina torquens
Sævit agris, aſperque ſiti, atque exterritus æſtu. 3 Georg. v. 432.

But when in muddy pools the water ſinks,
And the chapt earth is furrow'd o'er with chinks;
He leaves the fens, and leaps upon the ground,
And hiſſing rolls his glaring eyes around:
With thirſt inflam'd, impatient of the Heats,
He rages in the fields, and wide deſtruction threats. DRYDEN.

Ovid has with peculiar judgement ſeized this idea, and carried it to the north pole,

Quæque polo poſita eſt glaciali proxima ſerpens,
Frigore pigra prius, neque formidabilis ulli,
Incaluit, ſumpſitque novas fervoribus iras. Met. l. 2. v. 173.

The folded ſerpent next the frozen pole,
Stiff and benumb'd before, began to roll,
And rag'd with inward heat, and threaten'd war,
And ſhot a redder light from ev'ry ſtar. ADDISON.

Statius could not omit this circumſtance, though his immenſe dragon was a very quiet animal;

Sævior anfractu laterum ſinuoſa retorquens
Terga ſolo, ſiccique nocens furit igne veneni. Theb. l. 5.

p. 164. l. 8.

As Menalippus here and Megareus were of the dragon-race that ſprung armed from the earth, there is a peculiar propriety in calling them forth to defend that earth, and repay that nouriture ſhe gave them.

p. 165. l. 18.

Stanley allows that this inſigne may be ſuppoſed to allude to an antient cuſtom in uſe before the invention of trumpets, where the torch bearer, ſacred to Mars, by ſtepping into the middle ſpace between the two armies uſed to brandiſh it as a ſignal for the onſet. The man being naked marks the contempt with which Capaneus treated the enemy, and implies that he needed no arms to attack and fire the city. R. P. Jodrell.

Theſe obſervations are in the genuine ſpirit of criticiſm, and ſhow great penetration and judgement: Euripides could give this torch-bearer the name of Pro-

Prometheus only as a metonymy; and from this cuſtom aroſe that bold metaphor which we ſhall find in the Perſians, Σάλπιγξ αὐτῇ ἐπίφλεγεν, and the Martemique accendere cantu of Virgil.

p. 166. l. 9.

There is a noble ſpirit of religious confidence in this aſſertion; it deſerves to be mentioned that this impious boaſter periſhed by that lightning which he thus defied. R. P. Jodrell.

The learned reader will find a bold and ſpirited narrative of the daring actions of this hero, and his death at the end of the tenth book of the Thebaid of Statius, a writer whoſe fiery genius ſometimes overleaped judgement, but who compenſates for this with

Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.

p. 169. l. 2.

Of the other gates we find no ſatisfactory account to lay before the reader: but the Scholiaſt here obſerves that Onca was one of the titles of Minerva at Thebes, which Cadmus introduced from Phœnicia, where ſhe was ſo called. The Scholiaſt, on the ſecond Olympic ode of Pindar, aſſerts that Cadmus erected at Ογκαι, a village in Bœotia, a ſtatue of Pallas, who was therefore worſhipped under the title of Ογκαία; ſee alſo the Scholiaſt on Lycophron, v. 1225. She had two temples at Thebes, from which ſhe had two titles, Oncæa and Iſmenia; the latter certainly derived from the river Iſmenus. See Œdip. Tyr. Sophocles, v. 20. on which the Scholiaſt gives Οἰκαία by miſtake for Ογκαία. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 169. l. 18.

The Scholiaſt on v. 170. interprets this to allude to a picture, perhaps a ſtatue of the protecting goddeſs placed at the entrance of the city, and quotes Lycophron for her name of Πύλαιτις ſo acquired. Alexan. l. 354. whoſe Scholiaſt obſerves that it has a ſymbolical meaning, and implied that Wiſdom ſhould be always at their Gates and doors. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 171. l. 11.

Amphion, the ſon of Jupiter and Antiopa, having received a lute from Mercury, was ſo excellent a muſician, that according to the fable he brought the ſtones together with which the tower of Thebes was built: hence Horace calls him Thebanæ conditor arcis. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 171. l. 12.

Statius with more reaſon aſſigns this impiety to Capaneus, who is repreſented as a contemptor divum, like Mezentius: the one ſays virtus mihi numen, et enſis, Quem teneo; the other

Dextra mihi deus, et telum, quod miſſile libro
Adſint.

p. 171. l. 17.

This mountain nymph was the Arcadian Atalanta.

p. 172. l. 8.

Οὐ καπηλεύσειν μάχην. Ennius expreſſes the ſame idea under the ſame metaphor,

Non cauponantes bellum, ſed belligerantes.

p. 173. l. 19.

This modeſt and amiable augur had foretold the ill ſucceſs of the war, and the death of all the chiefs, Adraſtus only excepted; he would therefore have concealed himſelf, but was betrayed by his wife Eriphyle, who had paſſionately deſired ſome female ornament, which Polynices had given to Argia upon the day of their marriage: this was a neck-lace, or rather a ceſtus, the work of Vulcan, and by him preſented to Harmonia when ſhe wedded Cadmus, and had been fatal to her, to Semele, and to Jocaſta. See Statius, L. 2. v. 272, &c.

Sic Eriphyleos aurum fatale penates
Irrupit, ſcelerumque ingentia ſemina movit,
Et grave Tyſiphone riſit gaviſa futuris.

As Amphiaraus was fighting bravely, the earth opened beneath him, and he deſcended alive to the infernal regions with all his arms, and in his chariot. Statius has exerted the utmoſt force of his genius in deſcribing this righteous hero.

p. 173. l. ult.

The Theſſalians gave the Feaſts of Ceres the name of Omolôia, des deux mots, Omou enſemble, and Lôion meilleur, excellent. Hiſtoire religieuſe du Calandrier, par M. Court de Gebelin. The Scholiaſt tells us that theſe gates were ſo called from Omolois, a daughter of Niobe.

p. 176. l. 20.

Amidſt the obſcurity of this paſſage, and the uncertainty of the annotators, the tranſlator has ſelected that idea, which ſeems moſt poetical.

p. 178. l. 14.

At the mention of each of the other chiefs Eteocles had ſhown himſelf unmoved, and given his orders with calmneſs and prudence; nay, his reflections on Amphiaraus have a ſolemn air of religion: but no ſooner is his brother named, than he loſes all temper; he begins indeed as if he would lament the unhappy fate of his family, but ſoon ſtarts from that idea, and though himſelf the aggreſſor, reviles his brother as inſolent, outrageous, and unjuſt from his infancy; then in the ſpirit of a man that has done an injury, who never forgives, works himſelf up to that ungoverned rage, which deſtroyed his brother, himſelf, and all the unhappy family of Oedipus.

p. 182. l. 8.

The Engliſh reader will allow that in variety of character and dignity of expreſſion this is one of the fineſt ſcenes ever produced by a dramatick author. The devices on the ſhields, the ſpirit of the warriors, and the defiance of Eteocles, all proclaim that wonderful δεινοτής, or tragick ſublimity, which characterized Æſchylus. What can we think then of the unfeeling criticiſm of P. Brumoy? who ſays, Cette ſcene eſt fort longue, et n' a pu être intereſſante que pour les Atheniens qui connoiſſoient Thebes, et les Chefs, dont on va parler. R. P. Jodrell.

p. 182. l. 9.

As ſoon as Oedipus came to be informed that he had killed his father Laius, and that Jocaſta, by whom he had two ſons and two daughters, was his mother, in the tranſport of his grief he tore out his eyes. When his ſons were grown up to man's eſtate, they ſhut up their father now old and blind, and agreed to divide his kingdom between them: Oedipus deeply reſented this treatment, and uttered the moſt horrid execrations againſt them, praying that they might divide the kingdom by the ſword. Statius knew how to make a fine uſe of this. How fatal a father's curſe was eſteemed we have ſeen in the Prometheus. To prevent its dreaded effects the brothers agreed to reign each a year alternately, and each alternately to leave the kingdom: Eteocles, as the elder, firſt aſſumed the ſovereignty; but upon the expiration of his year refuſed to reſign it to his brother: hence this war, their father's prophetic curſe, which is greatly repreſented through this tragedy as an avenging fury: even the ſword is perſonified, and repreſented as a rude barbarian from the mines of Scythia, and advancing over the ſeas, attended with miſchief and war, as a cruel umpire to divide the kingdom between the brothers, but aſſigning to each no larger a ſhare than their dead bodies could occupy on the earth. Theſe are the conceptions of a genius truly ſublime, and which diſtinguiſh Æſchylus and Shakeſpear from all other writers.

p. 186. l. 15.

Ἑβδομαγέτας Ἀπόλλων. —— ἑβδόμη, ἱερὸν ἦμαρ,
Τῇ γὰρ Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορα γείνατο Λητώ.

Heſiod tells us here that the ſeventh is a ſacred day, becauſe on that day Latona brought forth Apollo with the golden Sword, M. Court de Gebelin ſays with the golden Hair, à chevelure dorée. That the ſeventh day of each month was ſacred to Apollo, becauſe he was born on that day, was true only in the allegorical ſenſe: this was taken from the philoſophical ideas of the Ægyptians, brought into Greece by Pythagoras, reſpecting the harmony of the univerſe, founded on the ſeven planets and their relations, and in general upon the number Seven. Nonnus gives the Planets the ſame arrangements which they have in the muſical ſyſtem of the Ægyptians, where the ſun placed in the fourth rank, or in the middle of the progreſſion, terminates and begins the two quaternions, or fours, that form the ſyſtem. Gebelin's Allegories Orientales, p. 90. Milton knew how to make the fineſt uſe of this idea of the harmony of the ſpheres,

How

How often from the ſteep
Of echoing hill, or thicket, have we heard
Celeſtial voices, to the midnight air
(Sole, or reſponſive to each other's note)
Singing their great Creator? oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heav'nly touch of inſtrumental ſounds,
In *full harmonic number* join'd, their ſongs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heav'n. P. L. iv. l. 680.

p. 190. l. 2.

The dead bodies of Eteocles and Polynices are here brought on the ſtage.

p. 196. l. 2. & 3.

This paſſage is inexplicably obſcure. The tranſlator is obliged to leave it ſo.

p. 202. l. 16.

To be deprived of the rites of Sepulture was to the antients the greateſt of all calamities, much worſe than death itſelf. Euripides has a fine tragedy, the whole diſtreſs of which turns upon this idea; a tranſlation of this will ſhortly be given to the public, and the reader may expect to find the ſubject more fully examined. —— As the Chorus were by their office to be exact obſervers of the laws religious and civil, their taſk was here very nice and difficult. Not to aſſiſt in burying the dead, were impious: not to obey the mandates of their rulers, were an offence againſt the laws of their country: the poet with great judgement leaves this intereſting point undetermined, in the only manner that remained not to give offence.

NOTES

# NOTES
## ON
# AGAMEMNON.

### PAGE 215.

THIS watchman had his ſtation aſſigned him upon the royal palace at Argos, to obſerve the ſignal which Agamemnon had promiſed to give Clytemneſtra, when Troy ſhould be taken. This ſpecularis indicatio, this information by beacons was ſaid to have been invented by Sinon in the time of the Trojan war; but Æſchylus had a poetic right to attribute it to his hero. The man, after nine years paſſed in this ſleepleſs poſt, had reaſon to complain of a taſk which had fixed him to the roof of Agamemnon, like a dog; not that this was a debaſing idea, that animal being the emblem of fidelity, vigilance, and ſagacious diſcernment of friend from enemy, as the learned reader may find it accounted for in very good words by Plutarch in his Treatiſe on Iſis and Oſiris: they were therefore the uſual night-guards of great houſes; Alcinous in the Odyſſey had them of gold and ſilver,

Χρύσειοι δ' ἐκάτερθε κὴ ἀργύρεοι κύνες ἦσαν
Δῶμα φυλασσόμενοι.

### p. 215. l. ult.

One is ſurpriſed and ſorry to find the excellent Stanley interpreting ἀνδρόβυλον here by viro inſidiantem, as if this Watchman had penetrated into the horrid deſign of Clytemneſtra. He had indeed obſerved that the houſe was not now well ordered as of old; and he gives ſome humourous hints of the indecent conduct of the queen; but further than this his penetration reached not. Had the great ſecret been thus early diſcovered, it would have at once removed that ſuſpenſe and ſollicitude for the event, which the poet has the addreſs to keep up throughout the play, in which we ſhall ſee cauſe to admire his art and judgement.

p. 216.

p. 216. l. 15.

It is generally agreed that Troy was taken in the night; this ſupplied Euripides with the ſubject of a very pathetic ode in his Hecuba: thus Virgil,

Invadunt urbem ſomno vinoque ſepultam.

p. 217. l. 14.

The religious turn, which the poet has given to this ſimile, adds a ſolemn grace to the beautiful imagery, the Vulture being ſacred to Apollo as the god of augury, to Pan as the patron of hunters, and to Jupiter as the protector of kings.

p. 217. l. ult.

We receive the higheſt ideas of the civilized manners and ſocial ſenſe of the antients from their religious obſervation of the rights of hoſpitality; we have many inſtances of this in Homer, particularly in the interview of Glaucus and Diomede. Jupiter himſelf was the protector of theſe Laws, hence his title of ξένιος: to theſe laws Ovid alludes,

Auſus es hoſpitii temeratis advena ſacris
Legitimam nuptæ ſollicitare fidem.

p. 218. l. 1.

Helena was ſaid to have been carried off by Theſeus, before ſhe was wedded to Menelaus.

p. 218. l. 10.

The Fates and the Furies, at whoſe rites no fire was uſed.

p. 219. l. 10.

P. Brumoy, complaining of the obſcurity of this tragedy, ſays, il y a tant de métaphores, de figures, et des tours extraordinaires, qu' on ne ſçauroit ſe vanter de les avoir tous démêlés. And of this ode, l' on peut bien défier toute plume Françoiſe de rendre ce morceau, tant il eſt defiguré et entortillé. Diſcouraging this: for how ſhall the Engliſh grey-gooſe-quill hope to give the critical reader ſatisfaction where the plume Françoiſe deſpairs? Eſſayons cependant.

The Chorus, ſeized with a ſacred inſpiration, records the omen which was given to the brother kings on their march from Argos. Two Eagles, the one of dark plumage, the ſtrongeſt and the ſwifteſt of the kind, the other of a ſpecies ſomewhat inferior, ſeize a pregnant hare, and bear it in their talons to the palace of Agamemnon.

p. 220. l. 11.

The fate-foretelling Chalcas explains the omen, that the imperial eagles denote the royal brothers, and the capture of the hare their ſucceſs in taking Troy: but as the hare was pregnant, it was under the immediate protection of Diana, who as goddeſs of the chace was the guardian of the infant race of all animals that

that are feræ naturæ: this the prophet fears is an indication of the anger of that goddeſs.

This paſſage is very obſcure, and certainly nothing elucidated by the annotator, who ſends us to the ſparrows at Aulis for its interpretation; whereas the preciſe words of the Chorus confine us to a ſingle omen given to the kings when they were marching from the royal palace at Argos,

Μόρσιμ' ἀπ' ὀρνίθων
Οδίων οἴκοις βασιλείοις. v. 164. Æſchyl.

Nor will φιλομάζοις ὀβρικάλοισι permit us to think of unfledged birds: leaving Pauw and his adverſaries then to ſettle what he calls ineptias grammaticorum, we thankfully adopt the very beautiful image he has given us, and proceed.

p. 222. l. 6.

The prophet, impreſſed with the idea of the anger of Diana, invokes Apollo to appeaſe his ſiſter, that ſhe might not raiſe any adverſe winds to retard the expedition, nor demand any ſacrifice of horrid and barbaric rites: by the firſt alluding to the contrary winds which afterwards detained the fleet at Aulis; by the latter, to the ſacrifice of Iphigenia. Thus far the Chorus has recorded the prophecy of Chalcas, and with as little obſcurity as one has reaſon to expect in ſuch oracular anſwers, except in the beginning of the epode, where the text is unhappily corrupted.

p. 223. l. 2.

The Chorus now reaſſumes its proper character, and begins this ode with a ſolemn addreſs to Jupiter, illud, quicquid eſt, ſummum, if that name were agreeable to him; for the antients in their invocations of the gods were under a ſuperſtitious dread of offending them ſhould they ſpeak to them by a name ungrateful to their ears, or omit the name moſt pleaſing to them. Him the Chorus reveres, as in him alone their anxious thoughts could find repoſe. Whoever he may be, that without this pious reverence exults in his might, he enjoys but a ſhort-lived glory,

He meets a greater, and he dies.

(The old Scholiaſt underſtands this of the Titans; a modern Critic agrees with him, but at the ſame time clearly ſees that Xerxes and Darius are adumbrated.) This is a general reflection.

p. 223. l. 17.

On the other hand, the man, who amidſt his ſucceſſes pays his grateful vows to Jupiter ſhall have his proſperity continued to him. Though ſometimes, when the God leads mortals to wiſdom, he effects his purpoſe by afflictions; the memory of which makes a deep impreſſion on the ſufferer, and compels him to be wiſe: even this is acknowledged as the effect of divine grace. This is the addreſs of the Chorus to Jupiter, ſober, manly, rational, and a fine prelude to the afflictions of Agamemnon next to be mentioned.

p. 224. l. 12.

The anger of Diana now ſhows itſelf, and the Grecian fleet is detained by adverſe winds at Aulis; the conſequence of this is briefly but finely deſcribed; but even under this mortifying calamity the hero ſhows no impious diſcontent, accuſes no god nor man; but ſtands in a melancholy ſilence with his eyes fixed on an oppoſite iſland, and obſerving the refluent flood.

p. 225. l. 7.

In the midſt of this diſtreſs the prophet declared that the anger of the goddeſs would not be appeaſed, nor would the winds permit the fleet to ſail out of the harbour, but by the ſacrifice of Iphigenia, the beautiful daughter of Agamemnon; the anguiſh of his ſoul, and the conflicting paſſions of the father and the king are here pathetically deſcribed, till at length the king prevails.

Utcunque ferent ea facta nepotes,
Vincit amor patriæ, laudumque immenſa cupido.

p. 226. l. 5.

There is ſomething horrid in the ſuperſtition of antient paganiſm, which often impelled even the moſt religious perſons to actions that were ſhocking to humanity, and at the ſame time left them expoſed to infamy and puniſhment, as if they had been voluntary guilty. It was in the fates that Oedipus ſhould kill his father and marry his mother; by the very methods which he took to avoid the completion of this oracle, and thoſe the wiſeſt which human prudence could ſuggeſt, he was entangled in the fatal net; yet the anger of the gods purſued him even to the ruin and extermination of his family. Oreſtes was commanded by Apollo to kill his mother, with threats of the ſevereſt vengeance ſhould he preſume to diſobey; but no ſooner was the deed done, than he was purſued by the Furies, and haunted even to diſtraction. So here Agamemnon has this cruel alternative propoſed to him, either to appeaſe the anger of Diana and purchaſe a favourable wind by the blood of his daughter, or to ſee this great armament of united Greece, her heroes, and her glory unprofitably waſted at Aulis: yet even the Chorus here, though under the influence of the ſtrongeſt religious impreſſions, inſtead of extolling the hero for ſuffering the patriot-paſſions to prevail over private affection, cenſure the deed, though acknowledged to be neceſſary, as audacious, mad, and unholy. But we ſhall ſee that the poet knew what he was about.

p. 227. l. 9.

The behaviour of Iphigenia is deſcribed with inimitable beauty: there is an eloquence in her actions, in her eyes, in her attitude beyond the power of words. As ſhe had been admitted to her father's feaſts, and accuſtomed to entertain him with her ſongs, ſhe preſumed on his fondneſs, and throwing off her maiden veil (as its colour ſignifies) ſtood in the act to ſpeak to him; but hearing his voice commanding ſilence, ſhe obeyed with meek ſubmiſſion. This is the painting of a great maſter.

p. 228.

p. 228. l. 9.

The Chorus obſerves a judicious ſilence with regard to what enſued: we hope however again to introduce this unfortunate and amiable lady to the acquaintance of the Engliſh reader. The remaining part of the ode contains only a melancholy reflection introduced with great propriety as a gloomy preſage of the cataſtrophe; even the concluding prayer for the welfare of Greece has the ſame turn.

p. 229. l. 5.

On hearing good tidings, even though the report was uncertain, it was uſual to ſacrifice to good hope, εὐαγγέλοισιν ἐλπίσιν. Stanley. and to ſend a ſhare of the victims to their friends. See p. 218. l. 20.

p. 233. l. 15.

It was obſerved in the preface to this tragedy, that the character of Clytemneſtra is that of an high-ſpirited, cloſe, determined, dangerous woman; this character now begins to unfold itſelf. She had with deep premeditation planned the murder of her huſband; he was now returning; her ſoul of courſe muſt at this time be full of her horrid deſign, and all her thoughts intent upon the execution of it; we have in the remaining part of this ſpeech a ſtrong proof of this; ſhe is dark, ſententious, and even religious; ſo the Chorus underſtands her words, and ſo ſhe intends they ſhould; but the very expreſſions, by which ſhe wiſhes to conceal, and does conceal her purpoſe from the argive ſenators, by being ambiguous, and comprehending a double meaning, ſo far mark the working of her mind as to give us an hint of what is revolving there.

p. 234. l. 11.

This ode, as the laſt, begins with a ſublime and manly addreſs to Jupiter, acknowledging his power, and the certainty of his judgements on the impious, though deferred for a ſeaſon.

p. 235. l. 7.

Theſe judgements had fallen in ſo conſpicuous a manner on guilty Troy, that it was impoſſible not to ſee the immediate hand of the god, and to own that no might, no riches can protect the impious from his juſt vengeance.

p. 236. l. 7.

Yet vice has its aſſuaſive charms; but the remedy is not intirely concealed, as the miſchief glares through her diſguiſe: and as adulterate braſs is diſcovered by a proper trial, ſo is it with the wicked, who purſues his wanton ſports to the deſtruction of his country: conſidering the ſubject, the alluſion to a boy purſuing a bird has a ſingular propriety and beauty: here the great moral recurs again, that vice ſhall not be unpuniſhed; and the whole is applied to Paris, who in violation of the ſacred rights of hoſpitality, bore away the wife of Menelaus. There are few paſſages in Æſchylus more obſcure than this antiſtrophe; the tranſlator has applied all his attention to it, but preſumes not to ſay how far he

has ſucceeded. The ſame critic, who before ſent us to Aulis for a ſparrow's neſt, has here diſcovered the firebrand of Hecuba, the prophecy of Caſſandra, and the improvident care of the mother to preſerve her ſon: but this ſurely is all a dream.

p. 237. l. 7.

We are now prepared for an account of the departure of Helena with Paris: the diſmay of the Spartan ſeers, the affliction of the huſband fixed in ſilent grief on the picture of his inconſtant wife, then turning from it with a burſting ſigh, and his dreams, that preſent her to his imagination in all her attractive charms, then vaniſh and leave him in deſpair, are finely imaged; ſo the grief, which aroſe firſt in the houſe of Menelaus, and thence ſpread its gloom over all Greece, is well conceived, and tends to carry on the poet's general deſign, which was to repreſent the dreadful conſequences of this fatal war.

p. 239. l. 1.

Paris had been guilty of the moſt atrocious act of injuſtice to Menelaus; all Greece had united to revenge the affront, and had choſen Agamemnon as the commander in chief of this mighty armament; he had carried on a great and dangerous war for ten years; was brave, wiſe, and juſt; had ſubverted the empire of Priam, and raiſed the military fame of his country to the higheſt glory; was now returning crowned with conqueſt, and enriched with ſpoils, the moſt illuſtrious of mortal men: might we not then expect that his faithful ſenators, who loved and honoured him, ſhould have celebrated the victories of their king, and welcomed his return to Argos with pæans of joy? Inſtead of this, they dwell on the miſeries of the war, the unhappineſs of families which, inſtead of their lords, had received back only their arms ſtained with their blood, or urns containing their aſhes, the murmurs of the people, and the ſevere retaliation demanded for blood, even though ſhed in a juſt war: in ſhort, all their ideas and even their moral reflections are gloomy and of ill preſage. But the great poet knew what he was about: the character of the Chorus was ſacred, their claim of inſpiration had rendered it prophetic; they were not therefore to be dazzled with the vain ſplendor of triumphs immediately before them; but their minds were carried forward to future events, and there every preſage was dark and melancholy: and by this judicious conduct we are further prepared for the cataſtrophe.

p. 243. l. 10.

This alludes to the peſtilence in the Grecian camp, by Homer aſcribed to Apollo as a puniſhment for the affront offered to his prieſt Chryſes.

Thus Chryſes pray'd: the fav'ring pow'r attends,
And from Olympus' lofty tops deſcends.
Bent was his bow the Grecian hearts to wound;
Fierce as he mov'd, his ſilver ſhafts reſound.
Breathing revenge a ſudden night he ſpread,
And gloomy darkneſs roll'd around his head.

The

The fleet in view he twang'd his deadly bow,
And hiſſing fly the feather'd fates below, &c. POPE.

p. 243. l. 14.

Mercury, as the meſſenger of the gods, was eſteemed the patron of heralds, whoſe character therefore was always held ſacred.

p. 243. l. 16.

The Grecians in their ſolemn invocations of the gods, paid this reverence to the manes of their heroes, ſuppoſing them ſtill to be the protectors of their country. Thus Xenophon repreſents Cyrus, when marching into the territories of the enemy, before he paſſed the line of diviſion, to have ſacrificed to Jupiter, and the other gods, and at the ſame time to have invoked the heroes, the dwellers and guardians of Media; and after he had paſſed, to have again ſacrificed to the gods, and propitiated the heroes guardians of Aſſyria. Xen. Cyr.

p. 244. l. 19.

He not only loſt Helena, whom he had carried away, and the treaſures brought with her, but had involved his country in ruin.

p. 244. l. 20.

Mr. Heath attributes to the Chorus the part here aſſigned to Clytemneſtra. He thinks it unbecoming the dignity of the queen, and that the herald anſwers too familiarly: this miſtake led him into many others. The herald's meſſage was directly to the queen; and as he bore a ſacred character, her dignity did not ſuffer by the conference; neither is there any thing of diſreſpectful familiarity on his part: antient manners permitted not the Chorus to interrupt the queen. The laſt line of p. 245. is an evaſive anſwer: this artful woman wiſhed to appear to the herald, and by him to be repreſented as having ſuffered much during her huſband's abſence; being aſked, by whom? ſhe replies with an affected caution, that ſilence had been her beſt remedy. What ſeems to have miſled this learned critic was his opinion that the Chorus hinted at the infamous commerce between Clytemneſtra and Ægiſtheus: but the words on which he firſt founds his opinion, v. 555. of the original, have a very different meaning: the herald ſays, you deſire to ſee thoſe, who have as great a deſire to ſee this country; ſhe anſwers,

Such, that I oft have breath'd the ſecret ſigh.

Mr. Heath derives another proof from the word κλύοντας, v. 589. which being maſculine and plural ſhows that the herald had been addreſſing not Clytemneſtra, but the Chorus: it rather ſhows that this part of his diſcourſe had been addreſſed both to Clytemneſtra and the Chorus; had he ſpoke to the Chorus only, he would have uſed the ſingular number, as he does twice afterwards when the queen had left them,

Εκύρσας, ὥς-ε τοξότης ἄκρος, σκοπεῖ. v. 637.
Τοσαῦτ' ἀκούσας, ἴσθι τ' ἀληθῆ κλύων. v. 689.

Nor

Nor is his critique on νικώμενος, tranſlated "I am convinc'd," better founded; for this is a modeſt apology for their diſtruſt of Clytemneſtra's news, expreſſed in the laſt epode; to which ſhe replies ſarcaſtically, p. 248 l. 7. Mr. Heath finiſhes by interpreting the two firſt lines of p. 250. as if the Chorus inſinuated that Clytemneſtra had ſpoke with artful diſſimulation what ſhe wiſhed the herald ſhould relate to the king; and thereby hinted at her infidelity: but the words of the original are clear and expreſs, and incapable of admitting any other ſenſe that what the tranſlation preſents. Indeed nothing could be more unhappily conceived than the opinion of theſe intimations from the Chorus, as it is repugnant to the whole plan and conduct of the play.

p. 246. l. 16.

If the reader is not ſatisfied with Pauw's interpretation of this paſſage, nor with the tranſlator's, Mr. Heath is at hand, who renders it thus, "The dews wet us, the certain deſtruction of our garments, making our hair like the ſhag of wild beaſts." One would imagine that this learned perſon had Nebuchadnezzar in his thoughts, but that the hairs of the Aſſyrian monarch were grown like eagle's feathers. If by ἔνθηρον τρίχα we underſtand the ſhaggy coverings of the tents, we ſhall find it a good military idea.

p. 249. l. 15.

Of this paſſage Pauw honeſtly ſays aliquid ſubeſt quod ego non intelligo. Mr. Heath diſapproves the alluſion, though he thinks it a proverbial expreſſion, the grace of which is loſt upon our ignorance, and ſays quod nos non videmus alius forſan olim videbit. In the mean time the tranſlator had only one part to take, which was to ſupply what he thought the expreſſion wanted to render it intelligible; a part, which all the interpreters of Æſchylus muſt take, reduits ſouvant à deviner, on les voit heſiter, et chercher à rendre le ſens quand ils ne peuvent ſe former une idée exacte des mots.

p. 251. l. 7.

Antient ſuperſtition required that the feſtal days, inſtituted to the honour of the gods for any ſucceſs, ſhould not be contaminated with any inauſpicious word, much leſs with the relation of any unfortunate event: Æſchylus here aſſigns the reaſon: hence the εὐφημεῖν of the Greeks, and favere linguis of the Latins. Stanley.

p. 253. l. 3.

Pauw cenſures the poet here as inconſiſtent, the herald having before declared it improper to profane a day ſacred to feſtal joy with ill tidings: Mr. Heath defends him, by ſaying the tidings are rather of good than of ill: but this is directly contrary to the herald's words, who ſpeaks of tempeſts, wrecks, bodies floating on the waves, and the anger of the gods, as ills; and ſuch to common underſtandings they muſt appear: indeed he ſeems apprehenſive of this, yet thinks them very proper, as theſe unfortunate circumſtances give a preſage of the impending death of Agamemnon; at the ſame time they give it an air of probability, by rendering the king more obnoxious to the treacheries of Clytemneſtra,

temneſtra, as being returned with one ſingle ſhip without his friends and the army. Thus Mr. Heath; but it appears by the barbarous boaſt of Clytemneſtra, after ſhe had perpetrated the horrid deed, that ſhe had planned it in ſuch a manner, at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a place, that the execution of it could not be prevented. The poet had a deeper deſign: though the dramatic unities had not their name in his time, yet they owe their exiſtence to him, and he was as ſenſible, as any of his critics can be, of the impropriety of making Agamemnon appear at Argos the day after Troy was taken; yet his plan required this, and it is ſo finely executed, that he muſt be a critic minorum gentium who objects to it. The whole narration of the herald is calculated to ſoften this impropriety; a tempeſts ſeparates the royal ſhip from the fleet, ſome God preſerves it, and Fortune the deliverer guides it into the harbour; every thing is as rapid and impetuous as the genius of Æſchylus, and the expreſſion is ſo carefully guarded, that no hint is given of the veſſel's being at ſea more than one night: there are ſome ſubſequent expreſſions of the ſame tendency.

p. 253. l. 11.

Chorus.

The general deſign of this beautiful ode is ſo clear, that it wants no elucidation: the ſober and religious moral, that breathes through the richeſt deſcription and moſt vivid colouring, gives it the higheſt grace and the utmoſt perfection to which poetry can aſpire.

p. 253. l. 16.

This is one of thoſe paſſages where un tour vaut une penſée, et en eſt véritablement une: this grace, ſuch as it is, vaniſhes the moment you attempt to transfuſe it into another language. Helena, in alluſion to her name, is here called Helenas, Helandros, Heleptolis, the deſtroyer of ſhips, the deſtroyer of men, the deſtroyer of cities: a tranſlator in ſuch a caſe can only catch the general idea; if he retains the particular one, the fallen ſtar becomes only a cold jelly: happily he had here an opportunity of availing himſelf of the general ſuperſtition of the antients with regard to names: the philoſophy of which opinion no Pythagorean nor Stoic, though both ſchools devoutly taught it, explained with better argument than the father of Triſtram Shandy.

p. 260. l. 8.

Nothing ſhows the good ſenſe and fine taſte of the Athenians more than their regard to religious ſentiment even in their public ſpectacles. Tragedy was not yet allowed to loſe ſight of reverence to the gods, the love of liberty, and affection to their country, principles the moſt neceſſary to be inculcated on the people. Agamemnon could not return the gratulations of his faithful ſenators, till he had addreſſed his paternal land, and its gods, who had led him to this war, and brought him back in ſafety. Such ſentiments would reflect honour on more enlightened ages.

p. 260.

p. 260. l. 13.

The Engliſh reader will find the whole proceſs of the antient courts of judicature, the loud tongued pleaders, and the urns or vaſes of acquittal or condemnation in the Furies: the vaſe, into which the ſhells of condemnation are put, is here finely called "the bloody urn," αἱματηρὸν τεῦχος.

p. 261. l. 2.

Virgil knew how to make a fine uſe of this noble imagery,

Scandit fatalis machina muros
Fœta armis.
Illa ſubit, mediæque minans illabitur urbi:
quater ipſo in limite portæ
Subſtitit, atque utero ſonitum quater arma dedere.
Inſtamus tamen immemores, cæcique furore,
Et monſtrum infelix ſacratâ ſiſtimus arce.

We have nothing in our language more greatly conceived, or more finely expreſſed than the firſt part of the ode to Fear by Mr. Collins; it is in the genuine ſpirit of Æſchylus; the laſt line is manifeſtly taken from hence,

Αδην ἔλειξεν αἵματος τυραννικῦ.

On whom that ravening brood of fate,
Who lap the blood of ſorrow, wait.

p. 262. l. 15.

According to the ſimplicity of antient manners Clytemneſtra ſhould have waited to receive her huſband in the houſe; but her affected fondneſs led her to diſregard decorum. Nothing can be conceived more artful than her ſpeech; but that very art ſhows that her heart had little ſhare in it: her pretended ſufferings during his abſence are touched with great delicacy and tenderneſs; but had they been real, ſhe would not have ſtopped him here with the querulous recital: the joy for his return, had ſhe felt that joy, would have broke out firſt; this is deferred to the latter part of her addreſs; there indeed ſhe has amaſſed every image expreſſive of welcome; but her ſollicitude to aſſemble theſe leads her beyond nature, which expreſſes her ſtrongeſt paſſions in broken ſentences and with a nervous brevity, not with the cold formality of a ſet harangue. Her laſt words are another inſtance of the double ſenſe which expreſſes reverence to her huſband, but intends the bloody deſign with which her ſoul was agitated.

p. 263. l. 10.

Geryon was a king of Spain, killed by Hercules, fabled to have three bodies, becauſe he had three armies commanded by his three ſons. Clytemneſtra compares her huſband to this giant, and ſays that if he had been ſlain as often as was reported, this ſecond triple Geryon (meaning Agamemnon under that name, for it were ominous to ſpeak of the dead) might well boaſt to have received his triple

ple veſt, meaning his three bodies, and to have died once in each form. Mr. Heath might never have heard that Geryon, though he had three bodies, died more than once; nor does Pauw ſay it; but this does not hinder Clytemneſtra from making the ſuppoſition, and nothing more is intended; the words of Æſchylus are expreſs,

Απαξ ἑκάς-ω κατθανὼν μορφώματι.

And here, ut vineta egomet cædam mea, there is an inaccuracy in the tranſlation; it may be corrected thus,

Was noiſed abroad, this triple-form'd Geryon,
A ſecond of the name, whilſt yet alive,
For of the dead I ſpeak not, well might boaſt
To have receiv'd his triple mail to die.

p. 265. l. 15.

Agamemnon appears here in the moſt amiable light; he knows his dignity, and is not inſenſible to the fame which attends him as the conqueror of Aſia; but by reproving the exceſſive adulation of Clytemneſtra, he ſhows that manly firmneſs of mind, that becoming moderation, which diſtinguiſhes the ſober ſtate of the king of Argos from the barbaric pride of an Aſiatic monarch. The part, which he has to act, is ſhort, but it gives us a picture of the higheſt military glory and of true regal virtue; and ſhows us that as a man he was modeſt, gentle, and humane.

p. 269. l. 4.

The tranſlator readily acknowledges that he miſunderſtood the ſenſe of his author in this paſſage, and wiſhes that it may be the only paſſage in which he has been miſtaken. The Context is clearly this; Whilſt the root remains (meaning the huſband) the branches reach to the houſe, and ſpread a ſhade over it againſt the heat of the dog-ſtar. There is an image of this nature in Caractacus far ſuperior to this of Æſchylus,

Hail, hallow'd oaks! —— Happy foreſters,
Ye, with your tough and intertwiſted roots,
Graſp the firm rocks ye ſprung from, and, erect
In knotty hardihood, ſtill proudly ſpread
Your leafy banners 'gainſt the tyrannous north,
Who Roman like aſſails you.

Clytemneſtra goes on, When thou art preſent at thy domeſtic hearth, thou ſpreadeſt a warmth even in the winter; and in the hotteſt ſeaſon the huſband's preſence gives a refreſhing coolneſs to the houſe; the firſt image is of protection, the other two of agreeableneſs, like this of Ovid,

Solibus hibernis, æſtivâ gratior umbrâ.

The expreſſion in the original is highly metaphorical, which occaſioned the miſtake, "when Jupiter forms the wine from the unripe grape," which means

no more than to denote the autumnal heat; it being no uncommon thing for an original ruſticity of conception to be turned into parade and ornament. The tranſlation then ought to ſtand thus,

> But when the hot ſun in the unripe grape
> Matures the wine, the huſband's perfect virtues
> Spread a refreſhing coolneſs. Thou, O Jove —

And now, having mentioned her huſband under the uſual epithet of *the perfect*, (See Stanley on the Supp. v. 82. and on this place: hence their Ζεὺς τέλειος, and Ηρη τέλεια, as preſiding over Marriages) ſhe artfully addreſſes Jupiter, as the ſource of perfection, to perfect her intent: this play on the word is the ebullition of her heated imagination, impatient to execute her horrid purpoſe, as the opportunity was now arrived; and is another inſtance of that ambiguity with which this artful and determined woman took a pride in concealing her thoughts under the very words that expreſſed them.

p. 269. l. 9.

The learned reader is ſufficiently ſenſible of the difficulty of this ſtrophe; the tranſlator underſtands it differently from the annotators, adhering however to Pauw's interpretation of time and place, which is ſupported againſt Mr. Heath by the two laſt lines. The Chorus, under the power of an immediate inſpiration, in the ſublimeſt ſtile of poetry is ſtruck with viſions of terror, Δεῖγμα προς-ατήριον, that fill his heart with preſages, and compel him to utter the prophetic ſtrain ἀχέλευς-ος, ἄμισθος. Indeed no hope, in which he could confide, had touched his heart ſince the fleet ſailed from Aulis, and the troops advanced to Troy.

p. 270. l. 4.

Now indeed I ſee they are returned, (continues the Chorus) yet Erinnys begins the ſtrain, without waiting for the accompagnement of the lyre. Every idea is gloomy and hopeleſs; yet he wiſhes that his fears may be vain.

p. 270. l. 18.

In the mutable ſtate of human life ſickneſs is the contiguous neighbour to health; the bark in its faireſt courſe is driven on a rock; and ſloth diſſipates the greateſt wealth: yet the whole houſe does not fall under the diſeaſe; the bark is not ſwallowed up by the ſea; and Jupiter has many ways to reſtore the waſted wealth.

p. 271. l. 13.

But when man's warm blood ſtreams upon the ground, what charm can recal his life? Not even Æſculapius himſelf, whom Jupiter did not prevent through jealouſy of his life-reſtoring art. And now, having uttered this ominous preſage of blood and death, prohibent jam cætera parcæ ſcire, the inſpiration ceaſes, and he becomes dark and ſilent. This ode is conceived in the ſublimeſt ſpirit of poetry, yet that is but its ſecond excellence; it receives its firſt grace from propriety. As the odes in this tragedy neceſſarily contract an obſcurity from

from their prophetic turn, and have been generally complained of as being almoſt unintelligible, the reader, it is hoped, will not be diſpleaſed at theſe attempts to elucidate them.

p. 272. l. 8.

Stanley reads ἀμηνίτως, Auratus ἀμηνίτοις: Neſcio quare, ſays Pauw: Ego igitur dicam, ſays Heath; Quia non ἀμηνίτως, ſine irâ, Jupiter videbatur potuiſſe ſtatuere Caſſandram ex reginâ ſervam in inimicorum patriæque ſuæ vaſtatorum ædibus. One ſhould be cautious in oppoſing the fine taſte of Stanley. Clytemneſtra tells Caſſandra that her office ſhould be to ſtand at the altar of Jupiter; which was the moſt honourable department that could be given to captives of rank; the Phœniſſæ of Euripides were in this manner devoted to the Pythian Apollo; and Manto, the celebrated daughter of Tyreſias, was ſent to Delphos by Alcmæon, when he took Thebes: Jupiter therefore was gracious to Caſſandra by thus alleviating her misfortunes.

p. 272. l. 12.

Hercules had demanded in marriage Iole, the daughter of Eurytus king of Oechalia: the father deſired time to determine; which Hercules conſidered as a refuſal, and in revenge privately led away ſome fine horſes of the king. His ſon Iphitus, ſuſpecting that Hercules had taken them, went to Tyrinthia in ſearch of them. Hercules took him to the top of an high tower, and bade him look around to ſee if he could diſcover them; but Iphitus not ſeeing them, Hercules ſaid that he was wrongfully accuſed, and threw the prince from the tower: being ſeized with ſome malady, as a puniſhment for this murder, and the uſual expiations not availing, he conſulted the oracle of Apollo, who told him that he muſt publickly ſell himſelf for a ſlave, and ſend the money ariſing from the ſale to the children of Iphitus: his malady continuing, he went into Aſia, there voluntarily ſuffered one of his friends to ſell him, and became the ſlave of Omphale daughter of Jardanus, and queen of the Meonians. M. Court de Gebelin, Allegories Orientales, p. 164.

p. 272.

This bad woman, we ſee, was capable of the generous ſentiments becoming her high rank, but her ungoverned paſſions extinguiſhed them all. Probably ſhe was not the firſt that diſcanted on the inſolence of upſtart wealth; certainly ſhe is not the laſt, who has reaſon to obſerve of perſons ſuddenly enriched, "that they have not had their money long enough to be gentlemen."

p. 273. l. 7.

Mr. Heath well obſerves that the antient Grecians called all nations, that ſpoke not "the ſweet helladic tongue," ſwallows. The laſt line of this ſpeech is another inſtance of the double ſenſe, where more is meant than meets the ear.

p. 274. l. 8.

As this is the laſt, ſo is it the ſtrongeſt inſtance of the double ſenſe before obſerved; and her paſſion here carries it as far as could be, without endangering a diſcovery;

She's gone, a manifeſt ſerpent by her ſting
Diſcover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

p. 274. l. 10.

The Chorus, as it became them, expreſs themſelves with tenderneſs and humanity to the unhappy princeſs: this introduces a ſcene the fineſt perhaps that Tragedy has yet known. It would be an affront to the underſtanding of the reader to point out the nice gradation of the prophetic fury; and that heart muſt be hard indeed, which does not feel the pathos.

p. 274.

Θρηνωδίαι, ſtrains of mourning, were proper only to the infernal gods.

p. 275. l. 7.

The free ſpirit of Greece breathes in this; it thought that the day, which ſaw a man a ſlave, took away half his virtues.

p. 276. l. 4.

Oracular as the words of Caſſandra are, they ſufficiently for the preſent purpoſe expreſs the feaſt of Thyeſtes. A proper place will be found to give the full hiſtory of the houſe of Atreus.

p. 277. l. 15.

This paſſage is exceedingly difficult, where the author intended no obſcurity; which ſhows the preſent reading to be corrupt. Pauw has at leaſt made ſenſe of it, which we readily embrace till a better can be found: but it is his hard fate always to be reprobated; therefore Mr. Heath refers the χροκοβαφὴς σαγὼν, which the context requires us to apply to the chorus, to Caſſandra, as if through the force of the prophetic fury ſhe had fallen to the ground in a trance; whereas it is the critic that is in a deliquium.

p. 278. l. ult.

For Atys in the Text read Itys. Tereus king of Thrace had married Procne the daughter of Pandion king of Athens: afterwards, inflamed with luſt, he deflowered Philomela the ſiſter of Procne, and to prevent a diſcovery cut out her tongue, and confined her in a hunting ſeat in a wood; the injured lady wrought her ſtory in the loom, and contrived to ſend the web to her ſiſter. Procne, pretending the rites of Bacchus, attended with a female train burſt open the gates of the lodge and carried her ſiſter to the palace; there they killed Itys, the ſons of Tereus and Procne, and ſerved him up as a feaſt to his father; when he had ſatiated his hunger and called for his ſon, Procne told him what ſhe had done;

done; Philomela at the ſame time, beſmeared with blood, ruſhed into the room, and threw the head of Itys in his face. Tereus purſuing the ſiſters with his drawn ſword was changed into a Lapwing, Procne into a Swallow, and Philomela into a Nightingale. Thus Ovid tells the ſtory: but Æſchylus, and after him Euripides and Sophocles repreſent Procne as changed into the Nightingale.

p. 281. l. 11.

By this firſt baſe deed Pauw underſtands the horrid feaſt at which Atreus entertained his brother Thyeſtes; Heath the murder of Myrtilus, of which there is no mention by Æſchylus: it relates to the adultery of Thyeſtes with his brother's wife, the fatal cauſe of all the ſubſequent evils.

p. 290. l. 3.

This is the fineſt image that ever entered a poet's imagination; the words ſeem incapable of any other interpretation than what is here given them; accordingly Grotius tranſlates them thus,

Heu triſtia hominum fata! nam res proſperas
Vel umbra facile evertat. Infelicium
Imaginem omnem ſpongiæ delet mador.

Only for βολαῖς Stanley wiſhes to read μόλις, Pauw λωβαῖς; the tranſlator too has his conjecture. Then comes Mr. Heath, and makes a difficulty where no one ever ſuſpected one; he retains the obnoxious word βολαῖς, on which to build his criticiſm; and to our great ſurpriſe we are ſuddenly entertained with a game of back-gammon: if the caſt be a good one, as the dice are eaſily overturned, ſo human proſperity is ſubverted even by a ſhadow: if the caſt be unlucky, then a ſponge wipes out the unfortunate condition of thoſe that threw it: by γραφὴν he would willingly underſtand the figures impreſſed on the ſides of the dice; but as theſe may not ſo eaſily be wiped out with a ſponge, he is well inclined to think that it means the chalk with which the players of antient as well as modern times ſcored their games. It is peculiarly unfortunate that this learned perſon could find nothing to his purpoſe in Pollux, Meurſius, Salmaſius, and Souterius, whom he conſulted on this occaſion. But this is not the firſt time this favourite annotator put his extinguiſher over the flaming ſpirit of Æſchylus.

p. 290. l. 16.

Theſe words are ill underſtood as alluding to the murder of Myrtilus, the ſupper of Thyeſtes, and the other horrid deeds of the houſe of Pelops; they refer to a melancholy obſervation of the Chorus in a former ode, p. 240.

For never with unheedful eyes,
When ſlaughter'd thouſands bleed,
Did the juſt pow'rs of heav'n regard
The carnage of th' enſanguin'd plain.

p. 293. l. 1.

The irreſolution of the Chorus is here relieved by the entrance of Clytemneſtra. Having perpetrated the bloody deed, ſhe throws off the diſguiſe, and appears at once in her real character, determined and daring in her deſigns, calm, intrepid, and bidding defiance to the conſequences. She triumphs in the deed, and takes a pride in recounting her deep-laid treachery, and the particulars of its execution. Not ſatisfied with killing her huſband, ſhe mangled him when dead, which ſhe calls a ſacrifice to Pluto, and glories in the blood with which ſhe was ſtained; nay, would decency permit it, ſhe would even make libations over the dead, which Mr. Heath judiciouſly explains by telling us that it was a cuſtom among the antients after the defeat of their enemies to pour libations to the gods their deliverers in gratitude for their victory and freedom. Thus Hector ſays, VI Il. ult.

> Theſe ills ſhall ceaſe, whene'er by Jove's decree
> We crown the bowl to Heav'n and Liberty;
> While the proud foe his fruſtrate triumphs mourns,
> And Greece indignant through her ſeas returns. POPE.

The alluſion to this bowl is finely carried on, and gives an air of ſolemnity to her ſpeech, which breathes the genuine ſpirit of Æſchylus.

p. 295. l. 1.

It would not be eaſy to account for the irreſolution of the Chorus before, but that it was in the fates that Caſſandra ſhould never be believed, and the cataſtrophe was not to be prevented: we muſt obſerve however that there was nothing of timidity in it, nothing that ſhows their unwillingneſs to undergo even the greateſt danger for the ſake of ſaving or avenging their king: the ſpirit of Æſchylus revolts at the ſuppoſition; and theſe tame old men, though the danger was now imminent to themſelves, brave the queen to her face, and even threaten her and Ægiſthus with the vengeance of the ſtate: this free and manly ſpirit is well ſupported to the end.

p. 297. l. 5.

As the Swan, living or dying, is a very unmuſical bird, it has been the ſubject of wonder whence the idea of his melody at his death ſhould ariſe. Lucian is very pleaſant on the occaſion; the κύκνειον ᾆσμα became a proverb; and not only the poets, but even grave and philoſophical writers have ſuffered themſelves to be led away by it. The reader, who may not be acquainted with Mr. Bryant's works, will be pleaſed to ſee his very ingenious ſolution of this difficulty. "In all the places where the emigrants from Canaan, whoſe enſigne was the Swan, ſettled, they were famous for their hymns and muſic: all which the Greeks transferred to birds, and ſuppoſed that they were ſwans, who were gifted with this harmony. When therefore Plutarch tells us that Apollo was pleaſed with the muſic of Swans, and when Æſchylus mentions their ſinging their own dirges, they certainly allude to Egyptian and Canaanitiſh prieſts, who lamented

lamented the death of Adon and Oſiris." Analyſis, Vol. I. p. 380. Hence our incomparable Milton,

Thammuz came next behind,
Whoſe annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
The Syrian damſels to lament his fate
In am'rous ditties all a ſummer's day;
While ſmooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the ſea, ſuppos'd with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded.

p. 298. l. 5.

The Chorus had before compared together the deeds of theſe two daughters of Tyndarus: Helena had deſtroyed many in the fields of Troy, Clytemneſtra one man, but one of ſuch dignity that he was equivalent to many; the compariſon is here continued, that the baleful Spirit, which breathed through the houſe of Tantalus, had ſteeled theſe royal ſiſters to deeds of equal daring. Heath.

p. 299. l. 15.

Clytemneſtra had ſaid before that the avenging Fury of Atreus had ſacrificed the Man for the Children: the Chorus here replies, may an avenging Fury ariſe from the father to vindicate his Cauſe: the words are expreſs, and ſo underſtood by Pauw: Mr. Heath explains them by the old Fury of Atreus before mentioned: the μέλας Αρης next following is, in the language of Æſchylus, the Sword, and gives an obſcure but ſublime prophecy of the vengeance of Oreſtes; Mr. Heath renders it niger diſcordiæ genius, carrying its rage to ſuch an height as to ſtrike horror even into him that devoured his own ſons: Pauw tranſlates it pruinam et frigus puero voraci, i. e. Oreſti, præbebit: the difficulty lies in the word κυροβόρῳ, and will not readily be cleared up. Mr. Heath might well have ſpared his cenſures of Pauw, had he recollected that ſo horrid a deſign in Oreſtes as the murder of his mother muſt have a natural tendency to *freeze his young blood.*

p. 300. l. 16.

Stanley tranſlates the words ψιχὰς δὲ λήγει, "it ceaſes to fall drop by drop:" and ſo common ſenſe and the common rules of criticiſm require that it ſhould be rendered: Mr. Heath tranſlates them by "the ſtorm ſubſides for a time;" and thereby deſtroys the greatneſs of the conception.

p. 302. l. 9.

The relation of Pliſthenes to the houſe of Pelops is not well made out. Hither *he* comes no more, means the Genius of the race of Pliſthenes.

p. 304. l. 3.

The tranſlator readily adopts Mr. Heath's judicious correction of the text here, and wiſhes the Engliſh line to be read thus,

Thus periſh all the race of Pliſthenes!

p. 305. l. 4.

Behold this Sight. The learned Ger. Voſſius objects to the conduct of this play that Agamemnon is killed and buried with ſuch quickneſs that the actor has not breathing time given him. It appears from this paſſage, and ſeveral others, that the body yet lay where the murder was committed, and the funeral rites are ſpoken of as to be performed at ſome future indefinite time.

p. 307. l. 2.

The tranſlator has rendered the word τύχην here by omen, which "in its proper ſenſe ſignifies futuræ rei ſignum, quod ex ſermone loquentis capitur. Tully ſays, Lib. 1. Divin. Pythagorei non ſolum voces deorum obſervarunt, ſed etiam hominum, quæ vocant omina. This ſort of omen was ſuppoſed to depend much upon the will of the perſon concerned in the event: hence the phraſes "accepit omen," "arripuit omen." This was its firſt and proper ſignification." Div. Leg.

p. 308. l. 6.

On obſerving the different characters and qualities of Agamemnon and Ægiſthus, theſe words of old Hamlet readily preſent themſelves as a proper comment on the conduct of Clytemneſtra.

> But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
> Though lewdneſs court it in the ſhape of heav'n;
> So luſt, though to a radiant angel link'd,
> Will ſate itſelf in a celeſtial bed,
> And prey on garbage. ——

NOTES

# NOTES

## ON THE

# CHOEPHORÆ.

p. 319.

THE beginning of this play is loſt; but fortunately the ſenſe remains intire. Oreſtes, returned from baniſhment and advancing to the tomb of his father, firſt implores the protection of Mercury, as the conductor of the dead to the ſhades below, which was his known office; thus Horace,

> Tu pias lætis animas reponis
> Sedibus.

then addreſſes his father's manes, whilſt he places on the tomb his hair before conſecrated to the river Inachus; and this in perfect conformity to antient uſage: thus Achilles at the funeral of Patroclus cuts off his hair, ſacred to Sperchius: inſtances abound. As the Grecians wore their hair long, and dreſſed it with much elegance, we may ſuppoſe that the depriving themſelves of ſo conſiderable an ornament was an indication of grief; we are led to this by the words of Pindar, Pyth. 4.

> Οὐδὲ κομᾶν πλόκαμοι
> Κερθέντες οἴχονθ' ἁγλαοὶ.

When Helena, at her return to Argos ſoon after the death of Clytemneſtra, thought it neceſſary to preſent her hair at her ſiſter's tomb, ſhe takes care to cut it ſo as not to diſfigure herſelf; on which Electra ſays,

> O nature, in the bad how great an ill!
> But in the virtuous ſtrong thy pow'r to ſave.'
> See, ſhe hath ſhorn th' extremity of her locks,
> Anxious of beauty, the ſame woman ſtill. Eurip. Elect.

p. 328. l. 3.

The Chorus, as more experienced through their age, had inſtructed Electra how to addreſs the ſhade of her father, to pour her firſt vows for bleſſings on herſelf and her friends, and particularly to remember Oreſtes. As he was dearest to her heart, ſhe ſoons forgets herſelf; and her warmeſt vows are for his happy return; then, recurring to what particularly concerns herſelf, ſhe prays, not for a reſtoration to her princely rank, but for the virtues becoming her ſex, that ſhe may be much more modeſt than her mother, and her hand more holy. Propriety of character is one of the great excellencies of Æſchylus, of which this is a very delicate inſtance.

p. 329. l. 3.

The Chorus begins this Pæan to the dead with lamentations for their loſt lord; they are proceeding to invoke his aid; but this is ſcarce mentioned, when they break off with outcries, the prophetic rapture ſeizes them, and impreſſes on the imagination the youthful hero in all his radiant arms coming to avenge the death of his father. This is the ſublime and daring ſpirit which diſtinguiſhes Æſchylus from all other writers. It makes one bluſh to point out this to the reader; but Mr. Heath has rendered it neceſſary, who, by underſtanding this optative non interrogative, (as he expreſſes himſelf) hath annihilated the beauty and grandeur of the image.

p. 331. l. 4.

Much good wit hath been thrown away upon this paſſage, which might well have been ſpared, had the deſign of the poet been attended to. No diſcovery is from hence raiſed; but the mind of Electra is deeply ſtruck; ſhe reaſons, and conjectures, and ſo is finely prepared for the diſcovery which ſoon follows. Ariſtotle has mentioned this, but in his dryeſt manner; yet it is plain that he underſtood it thus, for he has drawn up the reaſoning of Electra into a ſyllogiſm in form. But envy and buffoonery are perverſe qualities.

p. 332. l. 5.

Hoc δεύτερον τεκμήριον plane ridiculum eſt: Et mirum, quod eruditiſſimus comicus id non perfuderit aceto ſuo: Sentiunt omnes, qui aliquid ſentiunt. Pauw.

Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Aut dici potuiſſe, aut non potuiſſe refelli.

p. 334. l. 3.

The Ladies, in the ſimplicity of antient times, valued themſelves much, and indeed were highly eſteemed for their ſkill in embroidery: theſe rich-wrought veſts made great part of the wealth of noble houſes: Andromache, Helen, and Penelope were celebrated for their fine work, of which Minerva herſelf was the patroneſs; and Dido was as excellent as the beſt of them. As they could not but

but know what their own hands had wrought, nothing could bring them clearer conviction than a ſight of their own curious labours. Oreſtes was nearly arrived to manhood, when he left or was driven from Argos; it muſt therefore be extreme malice or rival jealouſy, which could give this paſſage ſo ridiculous a turn as to ſuppoſe that Oreſtes now wore a veſt made for him in his infancy: beſides, the word ὕφασμα, as Stanley candidly obſerves, is a general term; and the reader is left at his liberty to underſtand by it a belt, or any other piece of embroidery: certainly it was not the veſtment of Oreſtes, for he returned in the habit of a peaſant; and it concerned him greatly that no part of his dreſs ſhould diſcover him to Clytemneſtra.

p. 335. l. 1.

A great poet gives every image, every circumſtance a peculiar propriety: this does not ariſe here merely from the alluſion to the eagle, which, as the imperial bird, finely characteriſes the royal Agamemnon; but it here acquires new grace from what the naturaliſts have told us of the enmity of the eagle to the ſerpent race, and their frequent battles, ſome of which ended fatally to the generous bird, as here: Virgil has given us a fine deſcription of one of theſe battles, wherein the eagle is conqueror;

Utque volans alte raptum cum fulva draconem
Fert aquila, implicuitque pedes, atque unguibus hæſit:
Saucius at ſerpens ſinuoſa volumina verſat,
Arrectiſque horret ſquamis, et ſibilat ore
Arduus inſurgens: illa haud minus urget obunco
Luctantem roſtro, ſimul æthera verberat alis. Æn. XI. v. 751.

As when th' imperial eagle ſoars on high,
And bears ſome ſpeckl'd ſerpent through the ſky:
While her ſharp talons gripe the bleeding prey,
In many a fold her curling volumes play;
Her ſtarting brazen ſcales with horror riſe,
The ſanguine flames flaſh dreadful from her eyes:
She writhes, and hiſſes at her foe, in vain,
Who wings at eaſe the wide aërial plain;
With her ſtrong hooky beak the captive plies,
And bears the ſtruggling prey, triumphant, thro' the ſkies. PITT.

p. 337. l. 5.

Æſchylus here in brief deſcribes the miſerable ſtate of the unexpiated murderer, his interdiction from every altar, every table, and every houſe; no one holding converſe or intercourſe with him as polluted and abominable. Stanley. This indeed was uſually the puniſhment inflicted by the ſtate; but the poet here finely aſcribes it to the vengeance of the Furies.

p. 337. l. 17.

Mr. Heath, who hath given us a ſpecimen of his critical acumen on the former part of this ſpeech, obſerves here that Oreſtes cannot be ſuppoſed to reckon his own penury among the cauſes that incite him to revenge his father's death; but his princely generoſity was affected at the poverty of thoſe illuſtrious conquerors who had overturned Troy. It muſt indeed have hurt his generous mind to ſee ſuch men enſlaved by a woman, and an effeminate man; this the poet with great judgement obſerves, but he no where ſays that their new tyrants had touched the ſoldiers' ſpoils: he makes Ægiſthus ſay that he was maſter of Agamemnon's treaſures; and Electra, in her firſt addreſs to her father's ſhade, with much indignation ſays to him,

Oreſtes
From his poſſeſſions exil'd, they with pride
Wantonly revel in the wealth thy toils
Procured.

and indeed it might be ſome aggravation to the misfortunes even of a brave prince to ſee the ſhameleſs uſurpers of his poſſeſſions waſting his wealth in riot, whilſt he was compelled to ſeek a miſerable and precarious ſubſiſtence from the charity of others.

p. 340. l. ult.

The grief, which Electra expreſſed for the murder of her father, flowed from a generous and noble ſpirit: her reſentment muſt therefore be generous and noble.

p. 341. l. 1.

This grief is compared to the ſcourge of the Furies, from whence a double claſh is heard; one given by the ſhade of Agamemnon ready to aſſiſt their revenge; the other by the murderers, which was moſt to be feared, becauſe their unhallowed hands were prompt to deeds of violence.

p. 343. l. 4.

Mr. Heath acutely obſerves that the true ſenſe of this paſſage hath eſcaped the ſagacity of all the interpreters, who have been led into their error by uniformly taking it as referring to the murder of Agamemnon; whereas in truth it relates ſolely to poor Electra, whoſe ears had been ſoundly boxed by her mother; and the words are to be rendered thus, "ſhe ſtruck a martial ſtroke, (meaning the firſt box on the ear ſhe gave her daughter, as the ſignal of battle) "then might you ſee many cuffs often repeated, her hand twiſted in my hair, "after the manner of a Ciſſian female warrior." Spirit of Pauw, be this an atonement for all the inſults heaped upon thee!

The deſign of Electra here is to excite her brother to avenge the murder of their father; and we ſhall perceive that this is finely carried on. Upon the accidental mention of "fairer fortune," ſhe ſays, how ſhall we obtain it? by

ſpeaking

ſpeaking our griefs aloud, or by flattering our mother? but they admit no ſoftening, nor can we ever think of her with any degree of tenderneſs: ſhe ſtruck the bloody ſtroke, ſhe repeated it on his unhappy head with all the fierceneſs of a Ciſſian Virago; then ſhe buried him without his honours.

Oreſtes anſwers preciſely to this, that vengeance, by the aſſiſtance of the Gods and by his hand, would inflict puniſhment for this wrong done to his father: but as he ſhows himſelf affected at the revenge to be executed, Electra proceeds to give him an account of the indignities offered to the dead body.

p. 343. l. 18.

To mangle a dead body was more horrid than the act of murder itſelf, as it made the Manes of the deceaſed a diſhonourable ſpectacle among the ſhades below, where they were thought to retain theſe disfiguring mutilations, and were of courſe diſabled from any acts of vengeance. Plato built a fanciful philoſophy on this opinion, of which Virgil knew how to make the true poetic uſe, when he deſcribes Eriphyle pointing to the wound given her by her ſon,

mœſtamque Eriphylen
Crudelis nati monſtrantem vulnera cernit.

The figure of Deiophobus is repreſented under the ſame idea.

p. 344. l. 4.

Electra, having given a relation of the injuries and diſhonours done to her father, now proceeds to the ill treatment which ſhe had herſelf received. Virgins had an honourable apartment in the houſe aſſigned them, the chaſte reſerve of antient manners requiring this ſeparation from the familiarity, and even the eyes of men: Electra was not admitted to this, but like a miſchievous cur turned into the court, and contemptuouſly neglected: this was the utmoſt indignity.

p. 346. l. 9.

Affection to her father peculiarly marks the character of Electra; of which ſhe could not give a ſtronger inſtance than this. Deprived as ſhe now was of all her ſhare of her father's riches, ſhe had it not in her power to offer any preſents at his tomb; but ſhould Ægiſthus be ſlain, ſhe devotes even her nuptial dowry to that purpoſe.

p. 350. l. 6.

Oreſtes ſhows throughout ſome marks of tenderneſs for his mother, and a reluctance to ſhed her blood. When Electra had urged him to do the deed inſtantly, he pauſes awhile to aſk for what cauſe Clytemneſtra had ſent theſe oblations to the tomb; being told that ſhe was affrighted with portentous dreams, he particularly inquires what they were. The viſion is finely and ſtrongly conceived: he takes it as a prodigy ſent from the gods to confirm his reſolution, he catches fire from it, and declares

ſhe

ſhe muſt die
A violent death: and with a dragon's rage
This hand ſhall kill her.

The ſpirit and beauty of the original is inimitable,

Δεῖ τοι νιν, ὡς ἔθρεψεν ἔκπαγλον τέρας,
Θανεῖν βιαίως· ἐκθρασυνθεὶς δ' ἐγὼ
Κτενῶ νιν.

p. 351. l. 2.

Clytemneſtra had told Agamemnon that Strophius king of Phocæa had taken Oreſtes under his protection from any dangers or diſturbances that might ariſe in the ſtate: the young prince had indeed the good fortune to eſcape from his mother, and was hoſpitably received at Phocis, from whence he now returned in diſguiſe, attended by Pylades the ſon of Strophius, whoſe friendſhip was ſo faithful to Oreſtes in all his diſtreſſes, that it became proverbial.

p. 353. l. 4.

When Althea, the daughter of Theſtius, was delivered of Meleager, the Deſtinies attended at her labour, and upon the birth of the child throwing a log on the fire as they ſpun his thread of life pronounced this charm, "O new-born child, we aſſign the ſame period of exiſtence to this log and to thee:" then vaniſhed. Althea ſnatched the log from the flames, and preſerved it with great care, till Meleager having ſlain her two brothers for rudely taking the head of the Calydonean boar from Atalanta, to whom he had preſented it, this unnatural mother threw the fatal brand into the fire, and the charm of the Deſtinies was fulfilled. This ſtory is told by Ovid, Met. L. 8.

p. 353. l. 7.

This ſtory is alſo told by Ovid, ibid. Minos, the celebrated king of Crete, was beſieging Alcathoe where Niſus reigned, on whoſe head grew a lock of purple hair, on which the ſafety of the city depended. Scylla, the daughter of Niſus, in love with the Cretan king, as Ovid relates it, or bribed with ſome female Gewgaws according to Æſchylus, entered her father's apartment as he lay aſleep, and cut off this charmed lock. The city was immediately taken.

p. 354. l. 4.

This is a very tragical tale. All the men of Lemnos, that were able to bear arms, had invaded Thrace, and continued the war three years: their wives, ſtung with rage and jealouſy, formed an horrid deſign, which they executed the very night on which their huſbands returned, to murder every male on the iſland. Hypſipyle alone ſaved her father Thoas. Statius has related the whole tranſaction with his uſual ſpirit, Theb. v. l. 70.

p. 356. l. 4.

Hoſpitality was ſo highly regarded, that it was amongſt the moſt honorable of the labours of their greateſt heroes to puniſh thoſe who offered inſults to ſtrangers: ſo that it was not beneath the dignity of Clytemneſtra in perſon to invite theſe travellers into her houſe; ſhe even takes a pride in recounting the magnificence with which they ſhould be entertained.

p. 356. l. 11.

This ſpeech conceals the greateſt art under an apparent ſimplicity; Oreſtes appears as a ruſtic Phocian, and unacquainted with the perſon of his king; of courſe he muſt be ſuppoſed to be a ſtranger to the tranſactions of that court, and the real hiſtory of Oreſtes; this prevents all ſuſpicion: the ſame affected ſimplicity and innocence is preſerved in his next ſpeech.

p. 357. l. 15.

Electra's affection for her brother induces her to attend Clytemneſtra: on hearing the feigned account of his death ſhe breaks into a formal exclamation on the curſe of Thyeſtes, proper enough as ſhe was circumſtanced; but what nature would not have dictated had her grief been real: ſhe cautiouſly avoids aſking the ſtrangers any queſtion, and even leads the queen from making inquiries, by expreſſing a fondneſs for her brother, and throwing out a ſevere reflection, which ſhe had reaſon to think would give great offence, and ſo ſhorten the converſation.

p. 362. l. 3.

Oreſtes had injoined the Chorus to be ſilent where they ought, and to ſpeak where their voice might aid him: they had kept themſelves near the tomb till they ſaw him enter the palace; they then advance with an intention of aſſiſting his cauſe, as occaſions ſhould ariſe: Giliſſa ſoon gave them a very favourable one, which they readily embrace, by conjuring that faithful ſervant to call forth Ægyſthus alone without his guards, which facilitated the enterprize of Oreſtes; to induce her to this they were obliged to give her hopes of ſome favourable event; but though they knew her fidelity, they could not be enough aſſured of her prudence to truſt her with the important ſecret: had they told her that the perſon, who appeared under the character of a meſſenger, had brought tidings that would give her joy, they had diſcovered too much; they prudently therefore refer her to the power of Jupiter, who might redreſs theſe evils: How? replies the nurſe, Oreſtes our hope is dead: the anſwer of the Chorus is ſo ambiguous that ſhe could not poſſibly comprehend it in its full meaning, yet clear enough to induce her to aſk whether they had heard any thing that contradicted the report: not to anſwer this plain queſtion in the negative was to leave her mind under the impreſſion of hope, and with this ſhe is ordered to carry her meſſage, and leave the event to the gods: this required ſome management, and it is

finely

finely conducted. A criticiſm of Mr. Heath has given occaſion to this long note.

p. 364. l. 15.

Stanley has marked the ſenſe of this paſſage ſo preciſely, that one is ſurpriſed to ſee it afterwards miſtaken; but Pauw has ſaid μέγα ναίων ϛόμιον eſt Orcus: δὸς ἀνδρὰ, i. e. Agamemnonem: ejus umbra rediret domum ut filio adeſſet. Mr. Heath, who always hath a prurience to quarrel with Pauw quo jure, quâve injuriâ, has diſcovered that μέγα ναίων ϛόμιον reſpicit Apollinem ſpeluncam Delphis inſidentem, ἀνδρὰ Oreſtem. We allow the Critic his authorities that ϛόμιον is ſometimes uſed to expreſs the cave at Delphos; but we cannot give up the paſſage cited by Stanley from Pindar. Had Apollo been here intended, we certainly ſhould have heard ſomething of the μαντεύματα τα πυθόχρηϛα. But, ſays the Critic, Agamemnon was dead, nothing remained of him but his aſhes and his ſhade, præter cineres et umbram tenuem, therefore it could not be ſaid of him that beheld his houſe ἐλευθερίως, κὴ λαμπρῶς, κὴ φιλίοις ὄμμασι: but this is ſaid in defiance of Æſchylus and all antiquity. Could this learned perſon have forgot that Darius, who alſo was aſhes and a ſhade, was addreſſed as a mighty and magnificent power, δαίμονα μεγαλαυχῆ? Could he have forgot that Oreſtes had evoked his father to behold the Combat; and that Electra had implored Proſerpine to give him glorious force, εὔμορφον κράτος?

p. 365. l. ult.

The mention of Perſeus here obliquely inſinuates that Clytemneſtra was as dangerous and dreadful as Meduſa, on whom Perſeus could not look when he ſlew her.

p. 367. l. 17.

The tranſlator readily and thankfully embraces Mr. Heath's fine conjecture here, who for θεὸς propoſes to read θῶτιν. He wiſhes the Engliſh line to ſtand thus,

'Gainſt two fierce wolves the youth conteſting ſtands.

p. 369. l. 12.

Oreſtes afterwards in his own vindication pleads thus to the father of Clytemneſtra,

Should wives with ruffian boldneſs kill their huſbands,
Then fly for refuge to their ſons, and think,
Baring their breaſts, to captivate their pity,
Theſe deeds would paſs for trivial, as their mood,
For ſomething or for nothing, ſhall incline them. Eurip. Elect.

p. 378. l. 15.

Jupiter, deſiring to know the central point of the earth, ſent from his throne two eagles of equal wing in oppoſite directions; they flew round the globe, and met

met at Delphos, which was therefore called the central ſeat of Apollo, μεσόμφαλον ἵδρυμα Λοξίου: ſo the fable. Mythologiſts, or Etymologiſts give a more rational account of the matter: Phurnutus, ſpeaking of the Pythian oracle at Delphos, ſays, ἐλέχθη δὲ καὶ ὁ τόπος ὀμφαλὸς τῆς γῆς, οὐχ ὡς μεσαίτατος ὢν αὐτῆς, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς ἀναδεδομένης ἐν αὐτῷ ὀμφῆς, ἥτίς ἐστι θεία φωνή. De Nat. Deor. p. 226. — The very ingenious Mr. Bryant will explain this to the Engliſh reader. "The term Omphi is of great antiquity, and denotes an oracular influence, by which people obtained an inſight into the ſecrets of futurity. Hence the ὀμφὴ of the Greeks. For theſe Oracles no place was of greater repute than the hill at Delphi, called Omphi-El, or the Oracle of the Sun. But the Greeks perverted theſe terms in a ſtrange manner; finding them ſomewhat ſimilar in ſound to a word in their own language, their caprice immediately led them to think of ὀμφαλὸς, a Navel, which they ſubſtituted for the original word, and preſuming that Delphi was the Umbilicus, the center of the whole earth, invented the idle ſtory of Jupiter and the two Eagles to ſupport their idle Notion." Analyſis. Omphi.

# NOTES
## ON THE
# FURIES.

PAGE 391. l. 7.

THE cuſtom of making preſents at the birth of a child is of high antiquity: a paſſage from the Phormio of Terence is alledged to prove that the eighth day after the birth, on which the name was given, was eſteemed the dies natalis, and that the preſents were then offered; but that paſſage clearly proves that theſe gifts were preſented on each day,

porro autem Geta
Ferietur alio munere ubi hera pepererit,
Porro alio autem ubi erit puero natalis dies.

At the birth only ſome female relations attended as aſſiſtants to Lucina, and theſe came not empty-handed; on the other, the parents entertained their friends at a feaſt, the ſacra repotia patrum, and the gueſts were liberal in their preſents to the mother: in this ſenſe probably we are to underſtand Homer, who ſays that Delos upon the birth of Apollo was loaded with gold,

χρυσῷ δ' ἄρα Δῆλος ἅπασα
Βεβρίθει, καθορῶσα Διὸς Λητῦς τε γενέθλην. Hym. in Apoll. v. 135.

p. 392. l. 4.

By the ſons of Vulcan the Scholiaſt underſtands the Athenians, and tells us that Theſeus cleared the way of robbers: for which he is juſtly reproved by Pauw; for how came the Athenians to be ſons of Vulcan? he then recommends it to us to look in ſome dark corner, if haply ſomething may there lie hid which may give light to this paſſage. Apollo found the country around Parnaſſus rocky and barren,

Οὔτε

Οὔτε τρυγηφόρος, πάλαι' ἐπήρατος, οὔτ' εὐλείμων,
Ὡς τ' ἀπό τ' εὖ ζώειν κἀμ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀπηδεῖν. ib. v. 529.

To cultivate this country, and to introduce the arts of poliſhed life, was a work worthy of Apollo, and we find that it was ſoon done: as Vulcan was the god of fire, "which lends its aid to every art," the workmen in the finer arts may properly be called his ſons. Probably no deeper myſtery lies here concealed.

p. 392. l. 13.

It appears from Callimachus and Pauſanias that Minerva had a ſhrine before the temple at Delphos: hence her title Pronaia. Stanley.

p. 392. l. 15.

The poet could not with propriety omit the mention of this remarkable cave in the Delphian rock: it was ſacred to Pan and the Corycian Nymphs, the Daughters of the river Pliſtus. Stanley.

p. 392. l. 17.

This ſhows that the country was now cultivated. The ſtory of Pentheus is the ſubject of the Bacchæ of Euripides.

p. 393. l. 1.

Neptune is here invoked, as having formerly been the lord of this country, till he exchanged it for Calauria. Scholiaſt.

p. 394. l. 7.

Phineus was king of Pæonia: being old and blind, and having loſt his ſons, his daughters Pyria and Eraſia waſted his wealth in wanton riot: hence the fable that the Harpyies ſnatched the viands from his table. Palæphatus. It is obſervable that the antients in general, and particularly the elegant Athenians, moſt commonly repreſented the Vices under the moſt diſguſtful forms, and gave the perſonified Virtues the moſt beautiful and amiable figures.

p. 397. l. 1.

To add to the horror of the ſcene, the Ghoſt of Clytemneſtra appears. She retains in death the ſame fierce and implacable ſpirit which ſhe poſſeſſed alive: here indeed, from the religious principles of the times, ſhe had reaſon to be anxious for the puniſhment of Oreſtes, as without that revenge her ſhade could not appear with any dignity in the regions below: the death of Hector and the inſults on his body turn on this principle: even the tender and pathetic Virgil puts this ſentiment into the mouth of the afflicted Evander, Æneid. XI.

Go, friends, this meſſage to your lord relate;
Tell him, that if I bear my bitter fate,
And after Pallas' death live ling'ring on,
'Tis to behold his vengeance for my ſon.

I ſtay for Turnus; whoſe devoted head
Is owing to the living and the dead:
My ſon and I expect it from his hand;
'Tis all that he can give, or we demand.
Joy is no more: but I would gladly go,
To greet my Pallas with ſuch News below. DRYDEN.

Accordingly the death of Turnus is a ſacrifice to the manes of Pallas,

Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
Immolat, et pœnam ſcelerato ex ſanguine ſumit.

p. 397. l. 10.

An ill-grounded dogma of the Pythagorean philoſophy worſe applied.

p. 397. l. 14.

No wine was ever uſed in the libations to the Furies, therefore called νηφάλιοι σπονδαι. Theſe private and midnight rites to the Furies ſtrongly mark the character of Clytemneſtra.

p. 400. l. 11.

Mr. Heath inclines to think that reſpect is here had to Themis, whom Apollo drove by force from the Delphic ſhrine: this learned perſon had forgot that Phœbe ſucceeded to Themis without any violence, θελούσης, οὐδὲ πρὸς βίαν τινὸς, and reſigned in favour of Apollo. He has ſcarce hinted his opinion, but he wavers in it; and from what the Furies afterwards ſay, that Apollo had cruſhed the antient power of the Fates by deceiving them in the houſe of Pheres, is induced to believe that the poet alludes to ſome fabulous tradition, which is loſt in the lapſe of time. But ſurely all this perplexity might have been avoided had this learned perſon recollected that the Furies ſay of themſelves that Fate at their birth had aſſigned them this office, to purſue the murderer with vengeance till he dies: Apollo therefore, by reſcuing Oreſtes from their power, had deſpiſed the age-honoured Fates, and violated their antient Decree.

p. 400. l. ult.

Stanley rightly tranſlates this, the ſenſe of which is, Oreſtes, having been guilty of murder, ſhall find another equally guilty, who ſhall requite this on his head. Mr. Heath tranſlates it thus, "ſince he is now polluted with blood, he ſhall draw another pollution beſides that, on his own head:" this he explains as reſpecting the murder of Pyrrhus by Oreſtes, and refers us to the Andromache of Euripides. Nothing can be more foreign to the ſenſe of the poet.

p. 403. l. 5.

Apollo here ſpeaks like the God of Wiſdom: if Oreſtes was to be purſued with their vengeance, becauſe he ſlew his mother, whilſt they were favourable to that mother, though ſhe had murdered her huſband, they diſhonoured Juno the goddeſs preſiding over marriage, the nuptial treaties ratified by Jupiter, and the ſweet

ſweet endearments of Venus, more ſacred than the oath with which the treaty was confirmed.

p. 408. l. 1.

What ſhall we ſay to the wonderful birth of this celebrated goddeſs? Apollodorus gravely informs us that Jupiter was enamoured of Thetis, and though the lady was coy and changed herſelf into many forms to eſcape him, yet he obtained his deſire. She told him that if ſhe now had a daughter, ſhe would afterwards bring forth a ſon, who ſhould enjoy the empire of the ſky. Jupiter, finding her pregnant and fearing her prediction, to avoid it fairly ſwallowed her: this was a trick he learned of his father: the pregnancy however went on, though now it was transferred to the head of Jupiter, which in due time Prometheus, or as others ſay Vulcan, opened with an axe, and out leaped Minerva full-grown, and in complete armour. This was done on the banks of the Triton, a river of Libya, from whence Pallas is called Tritonia. Phurnutus tells us that the lady's name was Metis, which ſignifies Council: this helps him to a tolerable ſolution of the allegory, that Jupiter, only by following wiſe and prudent counſel, μητιέτης ϗ σωετὸς ὢν, obtained the ſovereignty of the ſkies: Prometheus therefore was the more proper to aſſiſt at the birth. It is only in continuation of the ſame allegory that Minerva is ſaid to have aſſiſted Jupiter in the deciſive battle againſt the giants in the plains of Phlegra, in which her ſervice was ſo conſpicuous, that ſhe obtained the name of γιγαντοφόντις, the giant-killer. We are the better reconciled to this ſtrange fiction, and to the explication of it, by the fine uſe to which Milton has applied it.

p. 409. l. 17.

Αλαοῖσι ϗ δεδορκόσι, Stanleius recte vertit cæcis et videntibus: Interpretis Græci ζῶσι ϗ θανοῦσιν ineptit: Pueri vident. Pauw.

Veram ſcripturam, ποινᾶν, proculdubio nobis ſuggerit ſcholiaſtes, hæc ita interpretatus ζῶσι ϗ θανοῦσιν ἑκδικον. Pauwius tamen miro ſtupore occæcatus lectionem hanc commentitiam eſſe, neque ex Scholiaſtæ verbis colligi poſſe pronunciare ſuſtinuit. — Scholiaſtæ autem aſſentior, appellatione cæcorum et videntium deſignari mortuos ac vivos, quanquam interpretationis hujus ineptiam vel pueros videre affirmat Pauwius. Sed talia quidem effutire longe eſt facillimum, probationibus vero idoneis aſtruere non cujuſvis forſan hominis. Heath.

As the tranſlator, by adhering to the interpretation of Pauw, ſtands in the ſame predicament of a babbler blinded with wonderful ſtupidity, he muſt make his defence as well as he is able; whether he ſupports it with proper proofs, the candid reader will judge. The Furies in this very ode tell us that it was a taſk aſſigned them by the Fates to purſue the murderer as long as he lived, ὅφρ' ἂν γᾶν ὑπέλθῃ: but at his death their commiſſion ended: Æſchylus in many places tells us that in the regions below the guilty perſon came under the juriſdiction of the infernal Jupiter: We are alſo told that the Furies, in the execution of their office, ſometimes appeared to the guilty, as in the preſent caſe, armed with all their terrors; and that they ſometimes purſue him ἀνηλίῳ λάμπᾳ, with ſilent ruin, equally inveſtigable

Δερκομένοισι ϗ δυσομμάτοις ὁμῶς.

From

From theſe conſiderations the tranſlator was induced to look on the Furies the avengers of each impious deed, not to the living and the dead, but to thoſe that ſaw them, or did not ſee them,

Whether they lie in ſhades conceal'd,
Or to the eye of day reveal'd.

p. 412. l. 9.

As the Chorus generally danced whilſt they ſung theſe odes, and the Athenians were excellent actors, we may be aſſured that the geſtures, the boundings of the Furies at this part were violent and really horrible.

p. 414. l. 5.

After the deſtruction of Troy, Sigeum, in the diviſion of its territory, was aſſigned to the Athenians, who built a temple on that promontory to their tutelary goddeſs Minerva. This had lately fallen into the hands of the Mitylenians. The poet, who was of a moſt generous ſpirit, and in all his tragedies endeavoured to inſpire his countrymen with a military ardor, takes this opportunity to encourage them to recover that tract. Stanley.

p. 416. l. 1.

This is ſaid in alluſion to the practice of the court of Areopagus, where in charges of murder, both the accuſer and the accuſed were obliged to plead on oath. Stanley from Lyſias.

p. 416. l. ult.

The antients took every method reaſon and religion could ſuggeſt to impreſs an horror of ſhedding human blood. Hector could not even make a libation of wine, becauſe his hands were defiled with blood, though it was the blood of enemies, whom he had ſlain in the nobleſt of all cauſes, the defence of his country,

By me that holy office were prophan'd;
Ill fits it me, with human gore diſtain'd,
To the pure ſkies theſe horrid hands to raiſe,
Or offer heav'n's great ſire polluted praiſe. Il. VI. POPE.

For the ſame reaſon the pious Æneas could not touch his Penates, though to ſnatch them from the flames of burning Troy, but conſigns them to his father,

Thou, thou, my ſire, our gods and relicts bear;
Theſe hands, yet horrid with the ſtains of war,
Refrain their touch unhallow'd, till the day
When the pure ſtream ſhall waſh theſe ſtains away. Æneid. 2. PITT.

Hence their various rites of purification, their oblations and ſacrifices. Under this idea the prieſteſs of Delphos is ſhocked at ſeeing in the temple a man abhorred

horred by the gods, becauſe his hands are ſtained with blood; and the Furies thus inſult Apollo,

> See all defil'd with gore thy throne;
> There ſate the murd'rer dropping blood.

Minerva is here apprehenſive of this pollution to her temple; this indeed is but hinted, and that with much tenderneſs, by the bare mention of Ixion. The famous Alexander Roſs tells us that "Ixion was the ſon of Plegias, who having murthered his father-in-law, went up and down the earth as a vagabond, at laſt Jupiter did pittie him, and expiating his crime received him into heaven." The concern of Oreſtes to remove this ſuggeſtion ſhows that he clearly underſtood the goddeſs; and her anſwer expreſſes her ſatisfaction as to this point.

p. 423. l. 6.

The Hetrurians were thought to have been the inventors of trumpets. In their towers upon the ſea-coaſts there were people appointed to be continually upon the watch both by day and night, and to give a proper ſignal if any thing happened extraordinary. This was done by a blaſt from a trumpet. Bryant's Analyſis, Vol. I. p. 405.

p. 423. l. ult.

This is perfectly in conformity to the uſage of antiquity. Whoever received into his houſe a perſon polluted with blood, expiated him with ablutions, ſacrifices, and the other neceſſary rites; after which the ſtranger had a right to the moſt inviolable laws of hoſpitality. Thus Ixion, having been expiated by Jupiter, had a claim to his protection.

p. 424. l. 12.

In the Lucta the victory was adjudged to him who gave his antagoniſt three falls: this is ſufficiently atteſted by the epigram upon Milo, who, having challenged the whole aſſembly, and finding none that durſt encounter him, claimed the crown; but, as he was going to receive it, unfortunately fell down: whereat the people cried out that he had forfeited the prize; then Milo

> Αἶρας δ' ἐν μίσσοισιν ἀνέκραγεν, Οὐχὶ τρὶς ἐστιν;
> Εν κεῖμαι, λοιπὸν τ' ἄλλά με τὶς βαλέτω.

> Aroſe, and ſtanding in the midſt thus cried,
> One ſingle fall cannot the prize decide,
> And who is here can throw me th' other two?

Potter's Archæol. Græc.

p. 425. l. ult.

When ſhe ſlew her huſband, ſhe ſlew my father, and thus in one act was guilty of a double murder. By the law, which the Romans borrowed from Greece, the father and the ſon are eſteemed as the ſame perſon, Pater et filius habentur pro una perſona. By this judicious obſervation of Pauw we comprehend the meaning of the anſwer in the next line.

p. 427. l. 3.

The prieſteſs of the temple of Delphos had before informed us that Jupiter himſelf had inſpired Apollo with his prophetic ſkill; and this god afterwards demands reverence to his oracles as the voice of Jupiter. Virgil was too well verſed in antiquity to omit ſuch a circumſtance; hence his ill-omened propheteſs, to give the greater dread to her prediction, ſays

Quæ Phœbo pater omnipotens, mihi Phœbus Apollo
Prædixit.

Virgil might poſſibly take this from Æſchylus, as Macrobius affirms; or both might draw it from the everlaſting fountain of Homer, who makes Apollo ſay at his birth,

Χρήσω τ' ἀνθρώποισι Διὸς νημερτέα βυλήν. Hymn. v. 132.

p. 429. l. 7.

The righteous Pauw is highly offended at the impiety of this tragedy: one cannot but ſmile to ſee with what zeal he enters into the intereſts of theſe hideous ſiſters, as if he were enamoured of them. This paſſage gives him great offence: ad hæc ego nauſeo hic: Nexum conſidera: Sic ineptias ineptiſſimas tibi deprehendes ſtatim: hæc tamen philoſophica videbantur Stanleio. Stanley had too juſt a taſte to judge of antient ſentiment by modern manners or more enlightened knowledge. Wretched as this ſophiſtry is, it certainly was at that time held as deep philoſophy; otherwiſe the learned Euripides, who was not generous towards Æſchylus, would not have put this ſentiment into the mouth of Oreſtes in his plea to the father of Clytemneſtra,

My father was the author of my being;
Thy daughter brought me forth: he gave me life,
Which ſhe but foſter'd: to the higher cauſe
An higher reverence then I deem'd was due. Elect.

p. 430. l. 16.

Nothing in general is more uncertain than the origin of places, and the reaſon of their names: when this is loſt in the obſcurity of time, what remains to the antiquarian, but to analyſe the word, and from thence deduce the cauſe? Our modern mythologiſts are ſupremely knowing in this proceſs; remote ages were not unacquainted with it. Our poet however has the addreſs even on this ſlight foundation to build up a pleaſing compliment to his countrymen.

p. 431. l. 7.

This whole charge of Minerva is worthy of the goddeſs of wiſdom. By celebrating the high antiquity of the temple, its honourable foundation, the dignity of the court, the authority and impartiality of its ſentence, the purity and ſuperior excellence of the laws, ſhe inſpires that reverence to the laws and the adminiſtration

miniſtration of them, which conſtitutes the firmeſt ſecurity of obedience and good manners.

p. 432. l. 1.

By this mention of Scythia the poet alludes to Anacharſis, the celebrated lawgiver of that country, cotemporary with Solon.

p. 433. l. 6.

Admetus, the ſon of Pheres, aſked Alceſtis in marriage; her father conſented on this hard condition, that he ſhould yoke a lion and a boar to his chariot: he addreſſed his vows to Apollo and Hercules, and by their aid rendered the ſavages gentle. Some time after Admetus being dangerouſly ill again addreſſed his vows to Apollo; the god refuſed his ſalutary aid, but on condition that one of his near relations would devote himſelf to a voluntary death for him: this Alceſtis did: Hercules, being then on his expedition to bring Cerberus from hell, brought back Alceſtis to her huſband. Fulgentius. Whether the Poet alludes to this ſtory, or to ſome other with which we are not acquainted, the learned reader will judge.

p. 439. l. 13.

This is a very curious paſſage, as it informs us that Minerva alone of all the gods had the command of the thunder of Jupiter: hence the learned Virgil,

> Ipſa Jovis rapidum jaculata e nubibus ignem. Æn. 1. v. 46.
>
> She, for the crime of Ajax, from above
> Launch'd through the clouds the fiery bolts of Jove. PITT.

At the ſame time it contains an oblique threat of the ſevereſt nature, but conveyed in the gentleſt manner, ſhowing that ſhe waved her power to force their compliance, and condeſcended to entreat, and giving an example of that placability to which ſhe endeavoured to perſuade theſe angry powers.

As this foul ſiſterhood was driven from the ſociety of the gods, admitted to no feaſt, nor ſuffered to abide in any temple, this offer of Minerva was very advantageous to them, and did them the greateſt honour; and as it was urged with the gentleſt and moſt inſinuating courteſy, it is no wonder that they ſuffered themſelves to be prevailed upon to accept it. From their conſent to abide here as friends their harſh name of Erinnyes was changed to Eumenides.

p. 447. l. 3.

Heſiod, recounting the progeny of Night, ſays,

> Καὶ μοίρας καὶ κῆρας ἐγείνατο νηλεοποίνας,
> Κλωθώ τε, Λάχεσίν τε, καὶ Ἄτροπον· αἵτε βροτοῖσι
> Γεινομένοισι διδοῦσιν ἔχειν ἀγαθόν τε κακόν τε. Theog. v. 217.

She gave birth to the Fates and to the mercileſs Deſtinies, Clotho, Lacheſis, and Atropos; who aſſign to mortals at their birth good and evil. It may not perhaps be eaſy to diſtinguiſh preciſely the different offices of theſe kindred powers:

by the Fates was deſigned a ſecret and immutable ſeries of events neceſſarily flowing from their cauſes; and their firm decrees extended over gods and men, as we learn from Phurnutus and Salluſt the philoſopher. The Deſtinies had their direction over human life, influencing the birth, the preſent and the future fortune of mortals. So that the Fates ſeem more peculiarly to have preſided over nations and cities, the Deſtinies over individuals.

p. 451. l. 16.

The tranſlator, always more ready to acknowledge his own errors than to animadvert on thoſe of others, begs pardon for a fault in the tranſlation here: he ſhould not have mentioned altars *blazing* to the Furies, knowing that

In their cold ſhrines no hallow'd flame aſcends.

He therefore wiſhes the line to be read thus, For you the altars *riſe*, &c.

# NOTES
## ON THE
# PERSIANS.

DARIUS, king of Perſia, having demanded the daughter of Jancyrus, king of the European Scythians in marriage, and not obtaining the lady, was ſo highly offended, that he marched with a great army to revenge the affront; but ſucceeding ill againſt the Scythians, on his return he ſent Datis and Artaphernes with an army of two hundred thouſand foot and ten thouſand horſe to ſubdue Greece; they had advanced within ten miles of Athens, which had particularly diſpleaſed the Great King, when Miltiades, at the head of nine thouſand Athenians and one thouſand Platæans, met them in the plains of Marathon, and gave them battle. Datis drew one hundred thouſand foot and all his horſe into the field; but the Perſians were totally defeated, and fled to their ſhips with great precipitation. To revenge this diſgrace Xerxes, the ſon of Darius, invaded Greece in perſon, with one thouſand two hundred ſhips of war, and two thouſand tranſports; his land forces conſiſted of ſeven hundred thouſand foot, and four hundred thouſand horſe: theſe, with the retinue of women and ſervants that attended the Aſiatic princes in their military expeditions, amounted to more than five millions. Xerxes, having forced the paſs of Thermopylæ, marched into Attica, which he waſted, and finding Athens deſerted, ſet it on fire. The Grecians had retired with all their Effects to Troezene and Salamis; here Themiſtocles with three hundred ſhips deſtroyed the Perſian fleet; their ſupplies of proviſion being hereby cut off, the land forces attempted to make their retreat through Bœotia and Theſſaly to Thrace, but moſt of them periſhed by the ſword, famine, and peſtilence. The battle of Platæa cut off the remains of this formidable armament, and ſecured the liberty of Greece. Such is the noble ſubject of this Tragedy. For this account we have the teſtimonies of Herodotus, Iſocrates, Diodorus the Sicilian, Plutarch, Cicero, Juſtin, Nepos, and others: yet a late ingenious writer has undertaken from the ſilence of the Perſian hiſtory, to diſprove them all: "can any man, who has made the leaſt obſervation on hiſtory, he aſks, ſuppoſe for a moment that ſuch myriads

could by any means have been maintained in one collected body?" — Hiſtory tells us that they periſhed chiefly through famine, and its attendant the peſtilence. He ſays "the deſtruction of ſuch a number would have convulſed the whole of Aſia, had it been united under one empire: could it poſſibly have been unfelt in Perſia?" — Was it not ſeverely felt? He thinks that "the ſtates of Greece appear in reality, with regard to the Perſians, to have been too far removed from that degree of importance, which could hold them up as objects of ſuch high ambition, or of ſuch mighty reſentment. Theſe famous invaſions have therefore an appearance of being ſimply the movements of the governors of Aſia minor, to regulate or enforce a tribute which the Greeks might frequently be willing to neglect. Marathon, Salamis, and other celebrated battles *may* indeed have been real events; and the Grecian writers, to dignify their country, *may* have turned hyperbole into hiſtoric fact, and ſwelled the thouſands of the Perſian Satrap into the millions of the Perſian King." Richardſon's Diſſertation. But this diſregard to the evidence of Grecian antiquity is only to prepare us for the reception of his Perſian antiquity: yet could this very ſenſible writer ſee and lament in other caſes that "attachment to ſyſtem has heaped error upon error, and raiſed ſplendid fabrics upon pillars of ice."

p. 468. l. 17.

The Perſians worſhipped the Sun as the ſymbol of the divine power: with the ſame proſtrations they worſhipped their kings, and even gave them the title of Gods, as their majeſty was the tutelary power of the empire. Hyde, de Rel. vet. Perſ.

p. 471. l. 14.

To expiate the ill omened viſion of the night: hence Perſius, Noctem flumine purgas. Stanley.

p. 471. l. 17.

As the Sun was peculiarly the deity of the Perſians, and the Eagle the emblem of royalty, this omen evidently points at Xerxes.

p. 472. l. 7.

The tranſlation follows the correction of Pauw: Mr. Heath retains the common reading, and renders the paſſage thus, "If my ſon conquers, he will be glorious; but if he be conquered, he is not accountable to the ſtate, but will rule the kingdom as uſual." The Spirit of Æſchylus is not thus tame. That Atoſſa feared a revolt in the ſtate appears by her intreating the Chorus, the great council of Perſia, to comfort her ſon at his return, and attend him to his houſe,

Μὴ καί τι πρὸς κακοῖσι πρόσθηται κακόν.

and by declaring that ſhe will not forſake in their afflictions thoſe whom ſhe holds moſt dear,

Οὐ γὰρ τὰ φίλτατ' ἐν κακοῖς προδώσομεν. v. 853.

And

And that the Chorus had the ſame apprehenſions is evident from the latter part of the next ode.

p. 474. l. 3.

This alludes to their rich ſilver mines.

p. 474. l. 7.

This was the glory of the free ſtates of Greece. The Perſian Monarch held all the ſubjects of his empire, of whatever rank or condition, as his ſlaves; he had indeed the gallantry to except his wife. Δίδωμι σοὶ ἐμαυτὸν δοῦλον καὶ σύμμαχον, I yield myſelf to thee as thy ſlave and aſſiſtant in the war, was the language of Gobryas when he ſurrendered to Cyrus. This was the ſervile yoke which Xerxes wiſhed to bind on Greece; to repel which they exerted themſelves thus glorioufly. Stanley.

p. 477. l. ult.

Atoſſa with great delicacy inquires in general

what ſceptred chief
Dying hath left his troops without a lord?

though her particular anxiety was for her ſon: thus the meſſenger underſtands her; and, having aſſured her of the ſafety of Xerxes, proceeds without further queſtion to inform her what ſceptred chiefs had periſhed. Mr. Heath deſtroys this propriety, and the whole ſenſe of the context by the idea which he has affixed to the words ἀνάνδρου τάξιν, and for which he has no warrant from Æſchylus: Would he carry the ſame idea to the εὔνιδας ἀνάνδρους of v. 289?

p. 478. l. 10.

Salamis was the birth-place of Ajax; ſo that hero boaſts in the 7th Iliad,

From warlike Salamis I drew my birth;

So Horace of his brother,

Teucer Salamina, patremque
Cum fugeret.

p. 478. l. 13.

Salamis was ſacred to Venus; hence it abounded with doves.

p. 478. l. 18.

Æſchylus never loads his verſe with unmeaning epithets; the colour of theſe horſes is particularly marked; it is not eaſy to aſſign the reaſon.

p. 481. l. 5.

C. Nepos tells us from Herodotus that the commanders of the Grecian fleet, terrified with the deſtruction of Athens, agreed to return home to defend their own ſtates: this muſt have been a ruinous meaſure as, had they ſeparated, they would

would have been eaſily cruſhed: Themiſtocles alone oppoſed it; but his remonſtrance had little weight with Eurybiades, the king of Sparta, who then commanded in chief: he therefore formed this plan, that they might all be obliged to fight, however contrary to their judgement: it ſucceeded. Thus Xerxes, ſays the hiſtorian, was conquered by the meaſures of Themiſtocles, rather than by the arms of Greece.

p. 481. l. 13.

As the Sun was peculiarly worſhipped by the Perſians, Xerxes with great propriety and beauty calls his place in the heavens "the temple of the ſky."

p. 485. l. 13.

Pſyttaleia, a rough uncultivated rock between Salamis and the continent. Pan is always repreſented as delighting in ſuch places,

Καὶ κορυφὰς ὀρέων, καὶ πετρήεντα κάρηνα. Stanley.

p. 486. l. 14.

Xerxes viewed this fight from Ægialus, a mountain on the oppoſite ſhore: the ſilver chair, on which he ſate, was afterwards placed in the temple of Minerva in Athens, and dedicated to that goddeſs, as was the golden-hilted Scymetar of Mardonius.

p. 488. l. 5.

The battle of Salamis was fought on the 20th of the month Boedromion, which anſwers to September; no wonder then that this early froſt appeared miraculous to the Perſians. Æſchylus obſerves propriety of manners in repreſenting them as adoring the Earth and Sky; the Greek Writers are unanimous in their relation that the antient Perſians worſhipped the Elements, as the prima omnium rerum ſemina; Fire, as derived from the Sun; the Air, or the wide circumference of the ſky, which they eſteemed to be Jupiter; the Earth; and Water. Hyde, a zealous advocate for the orthodoxy of Magiſm, cries out, Bone deus, quanta ſunt hæc mendacia! The fact however is inconteſtable; and whether the adoration was religious or civil, real or emblematical, was of no concern to the Athenian poet, though of much to the Chriſtian Divine. Ipſe viderit.

p. 493. l. 16.

The Perſians endeavoured to preſerve the virgin purity of water with the moſt religious attention, eſteeming *that* and fire, in the pure ſtate, to be the only images of the divine nature in this world: with this view guards were aſſigned to the fountains and rivers; and it was the higheſt crime to defile water, inſomuch that Tiridates, when he was going to Nero, refuſed to ſail, becauſe he held it unlawful to pollute the ſea: navigare noluit, quia expuere in maria, aliiſque mortalium neceſſitatibus violare naturam eam fas non putavit. Pliny. Hyde. p. 138.

p. 494. l. 1.

After theſe libations it was uſual to addreſs the dead with a ſolemn hymn: thus Electra in the Choephoræ, having poured the oblations at the tomb of her father, bids the Chorus

attune the Pæan,
And ſooth his ſhade with ſolemn harmony.

But here it was of abſolute neceſſity, as a *charm* to evoke the dead, ὕμνος ψυχαγωγὸς. The Perſians were greatly addicted to (what we call) magical incantations, which probably they learned from the conquered Chaldæans; ſo that nothing, as Stanley well obſerves, could be more in character than theſe rites, this νεκυομαντεία.

p. 496. l. 17.

The ghoſt of Darius here riſes ſuddenly, and interrupts the unfiniſhed hymn. The appearance of this royal ſhade, the ſervile proſtration of the affrighted ſatraps, the grief and the tears of Atoſſa, preſent us with one of the fineſt ſubjects for picture that ever employed the pencil of a painter; indeed Æſchylus abounds with pictoreſque images ariſing from the moſt vivid imagination marked with the moſt preciſe expreſſion. The excellent Mr. Romney gave a ſtrong inſtance of his good ſenſe and fine taſte, when he called Æſchylus "the painter's poet:" the public may expect to ſee this ſcene, and ſome others, deſigned by him in the genuine ſpirit of Æſchylus; ſo that the tranſlator will have this merit, if he has no other, to have given riſe to ſome paintings that will do honour to our country.

p. 497. l. 14.

Nothing could be more agreeable to the free republican ſpirit of the Athenians, than to ſee their proud invaders repreſented under this ſervile awe. The Perſians, when they approached the royal preſence, fell with their faces on the ground, and eſteemed this one of their moſt honorable inſtitutions, as in this adoration of their king they adored the image of God the preſerver of all things. Plutarch in Themiſtocle. But the Grecians had ſo great an abhorrence of this cuſtom, that Conon, though ſent to the Perſian court by his friend Pharnabazus, and charged with a commiſſion of the greateſt conſequence to the welfare of Greece, refuſed to be introduced to Artaxerxes, that he might not diſgrace his country by complying with this barbaric mode. Nepos.

p. 501. l. 11.

Authors have been careful enough to tranſmit to us an account of the intemperate pride of Xerxes. When the firſt bridge, which he formed over the Helleſpont, was broken by the waves, he ordered the ſea to be ſcourged for having dared to diſobey his will, and threw chains into it, thereby ſignifying that he would bind it as his ſlave in fetters: but it has not been obſerved that the peculiar aggravation of this aroſe from the impiety of it; for as the Perſians revered Water as particularly ſacred, Xerxes by this preſumptuous act aſſumed a ſuperiority over the divinity of the Sea.

p. 502. l. 14.

The Engliſh reader will be contented with this ſhort account of the Perſian monarchy as Æſchylus hath given it: this was ſufficient for his purpoſe. The excellent Stanley hath entered into a long diſquiſition; but, as Pauw well obſerves, Ea non ſunt hujus loci: this is rather the province of hiſtory, than of a detached note.

p. 503. l. 18.

The Chorus had reaſon to aſk this queſtion, as the tendency of the ſpeech of Darius is obſcure enough: it means that all the wars of all their former kings, and even his own, though the mention of Marathon is carefully avoided, were not ſo deſtructive to Perſia as this expedition of Xerxes: therefore, if they regarded the welfare of their country, they muſt think no more of invading Greece.

p. 504. l. 11.

This is prophetically ſpoken of the battle of Platæa, which in the following year totally deſtroyed the remains of this mighty armament. The meſſenger could not relate this, nor the Chorus know it, as the event had not yet happened: but the ſhade of Darius, having ſomething of divinity, and obſerving that part of the oracles of the gods were already accompliſhed, could with confidence declare that the other part muſt have its completion. Heath. Theſe oracles were mentioned before.

p. 505. l. 8.

The antient Perſians erected neither temples nor ſtatues to their gods, becauſe they did not think them endued with human forms, nor to be confined within walls, as to whom all things ought to be free and open: their ſacrifices were performed on high places to Jupiter or the circumference of the ſky, to the ſun and moon, to the earth, to fire, to water, and to the winds. Xerxes retained enough of this purer Sabaiſm to demoliſh all the temples of Greece in his march; though Hyde, in commenting on this narration of Herodotus, informs us that Perſia at that time abounded with temples; hence Xerxes amidſt his devaſtations, conſiſtently enough with the principles and practice of his country, ſpared the temple of Apollo at Delos, and the temple of Diana at Epheſus, conſidering the one as conſecrated to the Sun, the other to the Moon.

p. 506. l. 2.

The intention of this fine reflection was to incline the Athenians to accept the Perſian monarch's propoſal of peace, which Themiſtocles alone oppoſed.

p. 514. l. 1.

Ogyges was one of the moſt antient kings of Attica or Bœotia; authors are not agreed as to the place; we have the epithet before applied to Thebes. From the antiquity of this king all things very antient are called Ogygian: thus even the Egyptian Thebes is Ogygian, and in Pindar we find Ogygian mountains. Stanley.

p. 514. l. 10.

The Perſian monarchs had officers whoſe province it was to obſerve, and inform the king of all that was tranſacted in his wide dominions; they were therefore called the King's Eyes: this was an office of great truſt, and uſually aſſigned to the moſt faithful and honourable Satraps. Stanley.

And now, pour donner le congé à ces remarques, the tranſlator thinks it neceſſary to declare that living altogether in a private and retired ſtation he had not, during his engagement in this work, the opportunity of conſulting any learned friend on any difficulty, and difficulties enough occurred; neither did he know, till after the tranſlation was publiſhed, that there were any annotations on Æſchylus, except what Pauw has given with Stanley's Edition: therefore whatever miſtakes or inaccuracies may have eſcaped him, they are to be attributed entirely to his own want of judgement. In reading Pauw he could obſerve that he ſometimes ſuffered himſelf to be hurried into errors, and he lamented that ſo able a Critic would not allow himſelf time to reviſe what he had written; this he aſcribed to a certain impetuoſity of temper, which ſeems natural to him; he alſo diſapproves his rude and offenſive bluntneſs, and wiſhed that he had learned to ſacrifice to the Graces: but he ſaw in this ſaucy man much erudition, a bold genius, and a ſtrong conception of his author's meaning, which enabled him to elucidate ſome paſſages, which were before involved in tenfold darkneſs: no wonder therefore that he gratefully acknowledged his obligations to him. But he ſoon found that he had taken an unpopular part; the tranſlation was ſcarcely publiſhed, when he was taught to know that his honourable mention of Pauw had given offence; he was ſurpriſed and hurt at this, but was quickly informed that M. D'Orville had made a collection of Pauw's crudities, and publiſhed them purpoſely to expoſe the man. Shortly after this a learned friend ſent him Mr. Heath's notes: this gentleman was ſo highly offended at Pauw's "wanton inſolence and contumelious arrogance," that he ſees nothing in him but "the groſſeſt ignorance, and a perpetual alacrity in "blundering;" and if at any time he is compelled to acknowledge the juſtneſs of a remark, he accounts for it as for the blind man's ſhooting the crow; he therefore profeſſedly writes againſt Pauw: this has carried him too frequently into an aſperity of ſtile more indecent than that, which had excited his indignation; beſides that horrid ſneer, which is like the American mode of tarring and feathering a man that has been ſo unhappy as to offend them: this is the more to be lamented, as in every other reſpect Mr. Heath ſeems to have been a man of a very candid and amiable diſpoſition. But this is not the worſt; his perpetual propenſity to reprobate Pauw has ſometimes miſled him to obſervations very unworthy of him as a ſcholar and a critic. In this caſe what could the tranſlator do? his nature is moſt averſe to diſputation; but theſe annotators pull violently different ways, the tranſlation was between them, and was given to the public before he had ſeen the learned obſervations of the latter; he has

done what he is perſuaded a fair and honeſt man ought to do; he has carefully reviſed the tranſlation; where he is convinced that he was miſtaken, he has acknowledged and corrected the miſtake; wherever in a diſputed paſſage he thinks he has reaſon to adhere to his former interpretation, he fairly gives his reaſon; the learned reader will judge: Mr. Heath's great and deſerved reputation made this in a manner neceſſary for his own vindication; but he hopes that he has not ſuffered any aſperity to mingle with his diſſent; as he would be the firſt to be aſhamed of having violated the candour and good manners which are due from one gentleman to another.

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